Celina Ferguson
By her father.
Aug. 31st 1882

Celina Ferguson.
By her father.
Aug. 30th 1782

PICTURES FROM THE LIFE.

PICTURES FROM THE LIFE,

FROM THE GERMAN OF DR. AUG. WILDENHAHN.

EDITED BY

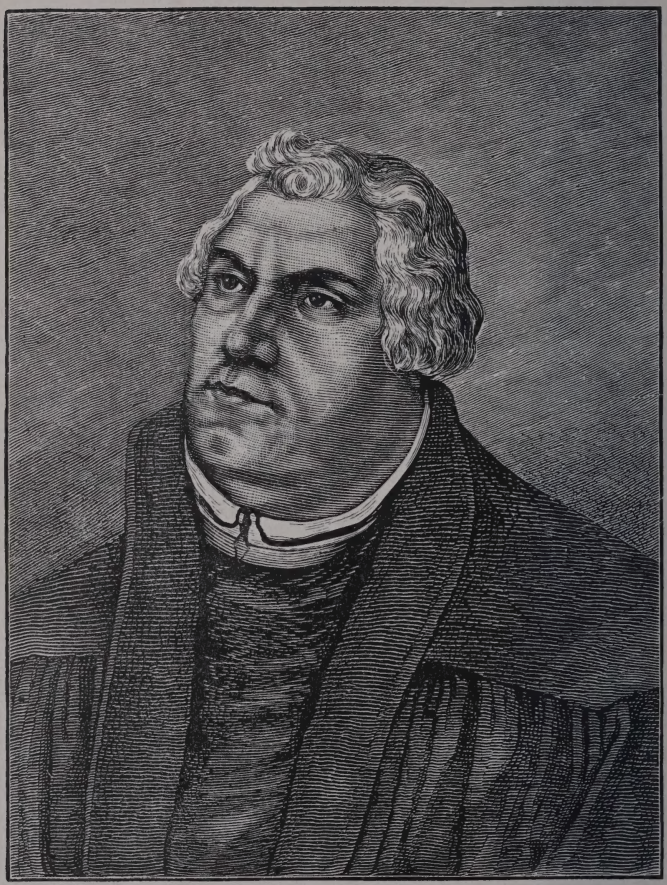
J. K. SHRYOCK, A. M.,

(*Editor of the "Fatherland Series."*)

8 VOLS., 12 MO. CLOTH, $1.50 EACH.

1. PHILIPP JACOB SPENER . . . . . Now ready.
2. PAUL GERHARDT . . . . . "
3. JOHN ARNDT . . . . . "
4. MARTIN LUTHER . . . . . "
5. DIET OF AUGSBURG . . . . . "
6. HANS SACHS . . . . . "
7. AUG. H. FRANCKE . . . . . In preparation.
8. VOLLBRECHT'S PILGRIMAGE . . . . " "

Any of the above vols. will be mailed to any address, postage paid, for $1.50.



PICTURES FROM THE LIFE.

MARTIN LUTHER.

A HISTORICAL LIFE PICTURE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF DR. A. WILDENHAHN,

BY REV. G. F. SPIEKER.

EDITED BY

J. K. SHRYOCK, A. M.,

EDITOR OF THE "FATHERLAND SERIES."

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA 46825

EASTON, PENNA.:
M. J. RIEGEL, PUBLISHER.
PHILADELPHIA, PA.: J. FRED'K SMITH.
1882.

COPYRIGHT.
M. J. RIEGEL,
1882.

PREFACE.

DR. WILDENHAHN, in his preface to the present volume of his "Pictures from the Life" Series, informs his readers that, after he had published *Spener*, *Gerhardt*, and *Arndt*, he hesitated long before he could summon courage to undertake the portrayal of the character of LUTHER, whose greatness and grandeur so far exceed those of any other of the Reformation worthies. The author's own words best express what finally decided him to make the attempt:

"The strenuous efforts which are now being made on every side, either to displace and hide from view, or otherwise to misrepresent and caricature LUTHER'S person and work, have admonished the author of the absolute necessity of at once restoring and exhibiting the true portrait of MARTIN LUTHER. This, then, is the apology for the present publication. Whether the writer has been successful, he himself cannot determine, although he unhesitatingly vouches for the historical accuracy of *every word attributed to* MARTIN LUTHER *in these pages*."

It is remarkable that the only translation of this, Dr. Wildenhahn's masterpiece, which has been made previously to the present one, carefully cuts out nearly every word that is distinctive in LUTHER'S teachings, a whole chapter being omitted in one place, and even

changes the title from that of LUTHER to the name of one of the subordinate characters—in a word, instead of "*restoring* the true portrait of MARTIN LUTHER," all the strong lines and marked features are carefully smoothed down, to make the portrait look as much as possible like that of any one or of no one in particular.

The Publisher has aimed at securing a translation that shall do justice to the original, and above all present a correct picture of LUTHER; believing that all Christians have a desire to know *exactly* what and how the great Reformer taught, whether or not they may feel inclined to follow him in every particular.

The Publisher wished greatly to make the present volume the last of the series of sketches; but the pressing demand for LUTHER, coming from the subscribers to the five preceding issues, decided him to alter his plans and gratify his patrons, by placing "LUTHER" sixth instead of last on the list.

He takes pleasure in acknowledging the courtesy of Rev. Geo. W. Frederick, in permitting the use of "LUTHER as a Hymnist." To the kindness of Miss Mary Welden he is also indebted for the faithful and beautiful translations of most of the poetry. To his friends and the public generally, he tenders his thanks for their warm interest in this Series.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.
Master Homberger, the Wood-Carver 9

CHAPTER II.
An Evening at the Black Eagle 21

CHAPTER III.
The Two Sisters. 37

CHAPTER IV.
Luther with His Family. 50

CHAPTER V.
Leonard Fichtner 64

CHAPTER VI.
Margaret Driven from Home 77

CHAPTER VII.
Homberger's Rash Act 90

CHAPTER VIII.
Luther and His Friends. 105

CHAPTER IX.
The Friends at Supper 118

CHAPTER X.
Margaret's New Home 132

CHAPTER XI.
Leonard and Margaret 145

CHAPTER XII.
Luther Ill and Despondent 162

CHAPTER XIII.
"This is My Body." 177

CHAPTER XIV. PAGE
Catharine Asks Forgiveness 196
CHAPTER XV.
Pastor Bugenhagen. 211
CHAPTER XVI.
Luther Near Unto Death 226
CHAPTER XVII.
Fichtner's Masterpiece 243
CHAPTER XVIII.
The Plague in Wittenberg. 260
CHAPTER XIX.
The Post of Danger 276
CHAPTER XX.
Luther's Good Counsel 299
CHAPTER XXI.
Repentance and Reconciliation 321
CHAPTER XXII.
Death of Catharine 341
CHAPTER XXIII.
Homberger's Confession 367
CHAPTER XXIV.
True Repentance 400
CHAPTER XXV.
Reconciliation and Joy 425

MARTIN LUTHER.

CHAPTER I.

MASTER HOMBERGER, THE WOOD-CARVER.

"And when they cast up the accounts of their sins, they shall come with fear; and their own iniquities shall convince them to their face." —Wisdom iv. 20.

DURING the afternoon hours of a June day in the year 1527, a young man passed through the Elbe gate at Wittenberg, and asked the watchman to direct him to the dwelling of Homberger, the wood-carver. Having been told that the old master lived on Coswig street, in a frame house with its gable turned toward the street, he politely thanked his informant, and proceeding in the direction given, soon stood before the dwelling.

On entering the hall he came upon a girl whose simple, almost coarse attire, led him to take her for a servant. The only thing which seemed strange, was that the girl bowed her head slightly upon her breast at his approach, as though she did not wish to see him. But when he noticed, at the same time, how she moved along the wall carefully and with extended hand, he exclaimed in a tone of sympathy: "Poor girl, are you blind?"

The girl started at the tender tone of the voice, and directed her lustreless eyes toward the youth.

"Yes, I am blind," she replied, "but not poor because of that. May I ask you, sir, where you wish to go?"

"To Master Homberger's!" the young man answered.

"Then you have but to proceed," continued the girl, "straight forward along this passage, up to the door of the yard, and then turn to the right; the workshop is open."

The young man cast another wondering glance at the maid, who had almost confused him by her reply; then softly, and with a pained look, he shook his head, and went toward the workshop.

Stepping in, he found the old master seated at a table, which was covered with hammers, chisels, and other carver's tools, his head, already well tinged with gray, resting upon his hand, and so deeply absorbed in meditation that he did not seem to observe the entrance of a stranger. The workshop was not in the very best of order; in one corner, rough blocks of wood lay upon and beside each other, as though they had been hurled thither with giant hand by one provoked and angry; in another corner, there stood life-size figures of saints, some of wood, others chiseled out of inferior marble; beside them a half-finished wooden ass, with one ear half broken off; and turned more towards the light stood a nearly completed statue of the Virgin Mary with the Child in her arms.

On another table there lay old rumpled papers, sketches and designs, in wild confusion.

Add to this, the master himself, with his gloomy appearance—surely a stranger needed some courage to enter.

When the youth had stood awhile in silence, vainly expecting to be noticed, he made a slight noise, in order to waken the old man out of his dream.

Upon this Homberger arose startled, glanced at the stranger in a suspicious and angry manner, and said:

"Who are you? Why come you hither? Who introduced you here?"

"Pardon me, master Homberger, if I have disturbed you, or have come at an unseasonable hour," answered the stranger, in a tone of kindly appeal. "I asked for you in the passage of the house, and your blind maid directed me hither."

"A blind maid?" repeated the old man angrily. But quickly regaining his composure, he continued more calmly, but still with some bitterness: "You are right, Margaret *is* a blind maid, blind in body and in soul; she does not understand how to announce a stranger. Perhaps you are come to give me an order? It may be the Flight to Egypt or the Entry into Jerusalem? You see, the ass for this purpose is already half completed."

"Pardon, venerable master!" continued the youth. "I am too poor to purchase works of art made by your hand; my object in coming is rather to assist you in your work, and to perfect myself in the art of carving images under your direction."

When the master heard this he smiled scornfully, and said: "Then you have come just at the right time. I was this moment considering about carving an image of St. Anthony of Padua, as having traveled through the world with his beggar's bag, and now starving here in Wittenberg. You can assist me in

this," the old man continued, with growing bitterness, "unless you would perhaps prefer to get these blocks and the wooden saints ready for next winter's fire. They will so far be of use."

The stranger stood before the old man disconcerted and irresolute.

"I am heartily sorry," at length he said, "that my unexpected entry has offended you. It certainly was not my wish to offend, and I again beg your pardon."

"There is no need of excuse," returned Homberger more calmly. "I only wished to tell you that you are still young enough to take up another trade in order to earn your bread. For if you are really an image-carver, and wish to support yourself by this business, then you may as well first of all carve yourself a beggar's staff, since you will need it soon enough."

"Is our glorious art really at so bad a pass?" asked the young man. "I have already worked at several places, and have everywhere found work enough."

"And why did you not remain there?" interrupted the old master. "If you are of the opinion that here in Wittenberg our glorious art, as you properly call it, is held in as much esteem as elsewhere, then are you greatly mistaken. In this place LUTHER has carefully provided that carvers and sculptors shall go to the almshouse, if they do not wish to starve."

"LUTHER, you say," cried the youth, and a bright glow colored his cheeks. "What has the cause of LUTHER, which concerns only the church and religion, to do with art?"

"Very much indeed," replied Homberger quickly, and with re-awakening bitterness. "LUTHER takes from

us masters and journeymen the body's daily bread, and offers us as a substitute the heavenly bread, as he calls it; are you satisfied with this substitute when your body is hungry and athirst? See, young man, only ten years ago I worked in this workshop with five journeymen, and could not fill all my orders; but since Carlstadt has thrown the images out of the churches, and LUTHER, if he could, would pitch the choir-chairs and altars after them, since then I have had no work for myself; and to look for bread in one's old age is hard."

"It may be," replied the young man, "that the new faith, which rejects the worship of saints, is somewhat unfavorable to our art. But it is everywhere said that LUTHER has seriously and sharply rebuked Carlstadt for his iconoclastic zeal, and that he has taught that images may well be used without injury, as in themselves they are neither good nor bad, if only superstition is kept away—and if, indeed, the images of the Holy Virgin and the other saints are no longer set up in the churches, Christ and his apostles will be found so much the oftener instead of them."

"I perceive," returned Homberger, sternly, "you too are infected with the new faith, and if for no other reason, there can be no communion between us."

"You are too severe in your judgment, master," said the young man, casting down his eyes. "If I can not deny that much of what is said of the new faith does not exactly seem objectionable, yet I am still a good Catholic Christian, and have even this morning heard mass in a town near by, where I spent the night. Apart from this, if you could give me some work, if

for only one year, I would serve you without wages. I would like to learn from you, for I have heard you praised as a very finished master of our glorious art. Besides, I do not come to you unrecommended."

With these words the young man drew from the side-pocket of his cloak a book ornamented with silver clasps, opened it by pressing it with his hand, and drew forth a letter, which he handed to the carver.

"Not so fast, young man!" cried Homberger, "your words do not seem to tally. You call yourself poor, and yet everything I see about you indicates wealth; and if you will serve me *without wages* you cannot be so very poor. You call yourself a good Catholic Christian, and yet appear as the eulogist of this man LUTHER, who will, himself, one day perish in the fire he has kindled; for it is out of his power to quench it. All those for whom holy Mother Church is too strict, and the government too severe, are rushing after him. How can you harmonize your expressions?"

"You judge me severely," said the youth. "But at least believe me that I am honest as regards you and our art. Put me to the test, and see whether I am worthy to become a master under your direction. But will you not first read this letter?"

Homberger took the letter in his hand with an annoyed look, broke the seal, and read it with wrinkled brow. "Your name is Leonard Fichtner?" he asked, and an uneasy, suspicious look glanced from his eyes. "Are you familiar with the Italian language?" he then suddenly asked, as the glimmering spark of an unpleasant reminiscence suddenly darted up into a bright flame.

The young man blushed, and after some hesitation, replied: "My name is Leonard Fichtner, and I have lived in Italy for a time."

"And," quickly interposed Homberger, "in Italy your name is most likely *Leonardo Pinetta?*"

Meanwhile the young man had by great exertion regained his composure, and now assumed his accustomed manner, and said:

"I well perceive, Master Homberger, that you are yourself acquainted with the Italian language, and doubtless are more at home in it than myself. I can assure you that I prefer my honest German name to your Italian translation. But will you not look at the recommendation, of which the honorable Master Urban, of Augsburg, has deemed me worthy in this letter? Master Urban has told me so many complimentary things about you, and that you would surely not turn me away if I asked you for work. He often told me how you and he had worked together for years in the same workshop, and had learned to love each other as brothers."

The old man had paced up and down restlessly during this address, and had evidently contended with conflicting thoughts. At length he stopped before the young man, returned his letter, and said: "No, it will not do; I can give you no work. Proceed on your way; you had better return to Augsburg, to Master Urban. What you would learn from me, you can acquire there also, and better. Yet you shall not depart without refreshment. Come with me." And without awaiting a reply, Homberger led the young man into the family sitting-room.

"Catharine!" He here accosted a young lady who was sitting at a window and examining with beaming eyes the contents of a small jewel-casket. "Catharine, prepare us some food!"

The young woman, disconcerted at the unexpected entrance of the good-looking youth, cast a hurried glance at him and left the room.

"I shall return immediately," said the master. "Till then you may take some rest." So saying, he too passed out of the room.

"All is then in vain," said Leonard, half aloud to himself. "How mighty must still be the voice of guilt out of the distant past, when he suspects at the first moment what I hoped to keep from him for years to come!"

He passed up and down the room deep in thought as he thus spoke, and now for the first time perceived that he was not alone. In a dark corner, half concealed by the stove, he discovered a form quietly seated before a distaff, the head bowed on the breast. Leonard at once recognized the blind girl, whom the master had called Margaret. He was afraid that his soliloquy had been overheard, and deemed it necessary, as much as possible, to prevent his words from being misunderstood. He turned to the girl, and said: "Your name is Margaret, as Master Homberger has told me."

"Yes, sir," she replied.

"And you are at service here in this house?" continued the young man. "How can you do your work, being blind?"

"They make allowance for me," said the girl. "Father and sister are satisfied with what I can do."

"How! father and sister?" exclaimed Leonard, alarmed. "Are you Master Homberger's daughter, and is Miss Catharine, as I heard you call her, your sister?"

"Yes, sir," replied Margaret. "Why are you so greatly astonished?"

A feeling of deep pain overspread the face of the youth. When he compared the poor dress of Margaret with the brilliant attire of Catharine, and thought of the contemptuous words with which the father had spoken of his own child, a sad shudder passed through his soul.

He cast a searching glance at the poor girl, and contemplated the marble-white, but full and wholesome face, with emotion. Then, going up to her, he grasped her hand, and said: "Miss Margaret, you do not know me, and cannot read in my eyes that I am an honest man; but have confidence in me. What I have just now spoken, thinking I was alone in the room, will you kindly promise to keep to yourself?"

"You cannot wish us ill," returned Margaret. "The tone of your voice tells me this much. I could deceive you, and say that I had not heard and understood what you said, but I am not inclined to repay your confidence with deceit. Not a word of what you said has escaped me; but as you desire it, I shall not repeat it. If you deceive me, may God judge you."

"Yes, God judge me, if I deceive you!" cried the young man with energy, seizing the girl's hand. "Margaret," he continued, "the ways of the Lord are wonderful, but he brings everything to a glorious issue. God Almighty has kept from you the light of

the eye, but he has surely illuminated your heart with a much brighter light. If you confide in me, then prove it. I would like to obtain work with your father, but he refuses. Speak a good word for me, that I may remain here!"

But the maiden withdrew her hand and with a painful smile said: "I am a poor girl, and would only injure your cause by trying to do you a favor. Strive to win my sister Catharine to take your part, and you will obtain your desire! Pay no attention to me, and it will be to your advantage."

Fichtner was about to reply, when Master Homberger again entered the room. He had laid aside his work-apron and put on a better garb. "You said," he remarked, turning to the stranger, "that you spent some time in Italy; were you in the holy city? and did you work there?"

"I was in Rome," returned Fichtner, "but let me tell you frankly, I would rather I had not been there. What I learned there of advantage in my art, I lost in my Christian faith."

"What does that mean?" said the master sharply, but was interrupted from further remark by the entrance of his daughter Catharine, who brought in some bread and meat, and a pitcher of wine, placing them on the table with the question: "Is this right, dear father?"

"It is well, my child," answered the father, and then turned to the young man. "Enjoy this poor fare. You have doubtless journeyed far to-day, and you need refreshment to strengthen you for to-day; and to-morrow, if you are satisfied, I will give you a letter to Master Urban, in Augsburg."

"It would not become me to oppose your wish," replied Fichtner. "I shall certainly return with a heavy heart, through the gate by which I entered so gladly and so hopefully. Yes, venerable master, you are not aware what a dear hope for my future you are destroying; how, for months in my dreams have I seen myself at your side, in your workshop, laboring under your eyes, and then leaving you only after I had become a thorough master of the art. Now it is all over."

At every word of Leonard, the old man's displeasure increased. "I am not used," he said coldly, "to be contradicted in my own house. I have informed you that I have no work for you, and I desire that our parting may be in peace. Partake of the slender fare which my poor house is able to offer, and then go your ways."

This invitation was not one likely to contribute to his enjoyment of the repast. He, therefore, betrayed no desire to eat, but bowed his head in disappointment, and remained silent, glancing furtively at Margaret, who was sitting motionless at her distaff.

The embarrassing pause which ensued was broken by Catharine. Turning to her father, with a crimson flush on her fresh cheeks, she said in an insinuating tone: "Dear father, you will not be angry, I trust, if I remind you that only to-day an unusually handsome altar has been ordered. Should not a little extra help be acceptable when you have so much work on hand?"

The old master's anger again arose: "Child, what are you saying in your folly?" But when his glance fell upon his daughter, wrath was dispelled at once;

his tone of voice was instantly changed, and he added gently: "I know, Catharine, you always mean well, but none the less have you spoken foolishly. But excuse me," he said, turning to the youth, "I need a little fresh air. Should you not leave before to-morrow morning, you may call on me for a moment for the letter to Master Urban."

With these words he left the room a second time, his discomposure being quite manifest, although he endeavored greatly to conceal it.

Fichtner then arose: "I came here," said he, "at an unfortunate hour. Accept my gratitude, esteemed Miss Catharine, for your kind offer of refreshment, but you will readily appreciate why I cannot avail myself of it. I will content myself with calling on you again to-morrow morning. May God be with you!" He bowed to Catharine, gave one quick look at the blind sister, and with a beating heart, passed out of the door.

CHAPTER II.

AN EVENING AT THE BLACK EAGLE.

"But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God with much contention."—1 Thess. ii. 2.

IN the beginning of the 16th century there stood in College street, at Wittenberg, a tavern named "The Black Eagle," which was much frequented by pilgrims, particularly by those whose path led to Rome, or other holy places, by way of Wittenberg.

The landlord, Paul Schulte, had himself in his youth paid two visits to Rome to fulfill certain vows, and after his return had erected this inn, more particularly for the benefit of all who might desire him to give information on various interesting matters connected with his pilgrimages.

The rise of the Reformation had materially diminished the number of this class of visitors, but in their stead those who came to Wittenberg, attracted by the reputation of LUTHER, as a rule made it their stopping place. That was the reason why many people from the city, who were fond of listening to travelers' stories, wended their way to Paul Schulte's to spend their evenings.

When Leonard Fichtner had left Homberger's dwelling, he felt keenly the need of food; and since he was now obliged to look around for lodgings, it pleased him to hear the "Black Eagle" warmly recommended.

On entering the wide and capacious apartment, he was speedily in doubt whether he could find entertainment. All the benches and chairs were occupied, mostly by young men, who were readily recognized as students by their neat vests, their short Spanish cloaks, and their wide collars. Among them sat a few aged men in broad-lapelled coats, their eyes directed intently towards a young man, who sat at the head of the long table, of a soldierly mien, and seeming to be the principal speaker.

The attentive host had no sooner noticed the entry of a new guest than he approached him, respectfully answering in the affirmative, the new-comer's inquiry for lodging, and conducted his guest, as the other tables were occupied, to a small table in a corner of the room, quite a distance from the rest, at which but two men were seated. One of these men wore a light cap of green satin; his face was adorned with a full beard, well cared for, and he seemed to be a man of some fifty years of age. The other was much younger, of a serious and gentle demeanor, who also listened to the speaker at the table with the greatest attention.

"By your leave, noble sirs," said Paul Schulte, "I pray you to permit this young man, who has just arrived, a seat at your table."

The request was promptly granted, and Fichtner took his place beside them. The confused conversation, which had heretofore filled the room, had now changed to absolute silence, out of which the voice of the speaker, referred to above, sounded loud and clear.

"Well," he said, "the story is certainly queer enough;

and as I saw and heard it from beginning to end, I can give you a true and honest account of it. You know that our illustrious electoral prince, John Frederick, who, on the second of this month, celebrated at Torgau his betrothal with the most serene princess, Sybil, daughter of Duke John of Cleves, made a journey to Dusseldorf, at the beginning of Lent of this year. Among other noble gentlemen, and a large number of servants, he took with him our dear Mr. Frederick Myconius, as his chaplain. It is not necessary to tell how this dear man gave such lusty blows with the Word that all who heard them were ashamed of the Papal abominations, and became adherents of the pure gospel. Perhaps only our Doctor MARTIN can wield a keener sword. Now, among the Franciscans at Dusseldorf, there was one named John Korbach, who was anxious to win his spurs by attacking our cause, and attempted to put the gospel again under a bushel, by means of 'ten articles.' On Septuagesima Sunday, which was the 17th of February, the Franciscan, Korbach, made a violent onslaught from his pulpit, with a view of unhorsing our doctor and all who are on his side—blasphemously abused the new preachers, as he called them, vigorously attacked Myconius, and recited the ten articles, which he said, a Christian must believe to be saved. Then there was—"

"By your leave, Mr. Soldier," interjected one of the company, "perhaps you could recite the ten articles?"

"It was the old leaven," replied the former; "in front, the authority of the Church and tradition, followed by the usual squadrons, to wit: invocation of the saints, pilgrimages, salvation by works, sanctity of

monastic life, and other things diametrically opposed to the gospel. He closed his sermon by stating that if any one charged him with error, he was prepared to accept better instruction from Holy Scripture. This pleased me and many others, I tell you. Among the cavaliers there was one known to all of you, the Baron von Wildenfels, a stately, courageous gentleman and a faithful confessor of the gospel, who sent me to the Franciscan with this message: That since the Francisan desired a better understanding of the Bible, he was invited to hear Myconius preach, and he should have the privilege of correcting our preacher in case the latter taught error or spoke contrary to Holy Writ. This did not strike Korbach favorably, and was met with a refusal, although I promised him, by order of the Baron von Wildenfels, that the baron would provide for an orderly discussion between him and brother Myconius. I failed to accomplish anything this time; and not until I had visited him again with the same message, and Myconius himself had made a like offer, did the monk get up his courage for the encounter, which was fixed to take place on the last of February at the quarters of the baron. You should have seen how the people thronged at the appointed hour to hear this religious discussion! First of all, our illustrious electoral prince himself, accompanied by the majority of his counsellors, as well as a goodly proportion of the counsellors and cavaliers of the Duke of Cleves. Besides these, many learned men, and ordinary citizens, foot-soldiers with helm and sword, as many as the spacious room could hold; and despite the raw, cold wind, the doors had to be left open, on account of the great concourse."

"Go on," cried the impatient listeners, when the narrator stopped for breath. "Your story quickens our blood, and makes us feel like taking part in the battle."

"That was the way I felt, too," the former now continued, "when I saw the Franciscan stand there proudly and contemptuously looking down on our Myconius, as the lion looks on the lamb he is about to devour. But here one could easily see which of the two had truth on his side. Myconius began, and stated in a few words how necessary it was to obtain a right understanding of God's Word, and admonished the monk in a friendly, brotherly spirit, not to adhere stubbornly to his own opinions, but to investigate the truth itself in all honesty, whether it be for or against our cause; and then, turning to the audience, be besought them to pay diligent attention, and if anything should be spoken not in accord with God's Word, by all means to judge and rebuke it.

"This was Christian and praiseworthy language, but it did not suit the monk; his fat face became swollen and red, and one could readily see how much he was galled. Addressing Myconius, he said, contemptuously, 'Listen, Fritz.' He then poured out a terrible tirade, because our Myconius desired to discuss Scriptural subjects before soldiers, and said that it was outrageous to dispute before such unlearned men; that only learned men could settle such things among themselves, and called upon him to meet him at Cologne, where he would be ready to answer him."

"Ha, ha!" cried a voice from the company. "In Cologne the honorable Mr. John Pfefferkorn, *olim*

Judæus, nunc optimus Christianus, as he is called in the *Epistolæ Obscurorum*, would have stood by him bravely."

"Yes, with the ban and the stake," said the soldier, smilingly, as he continued:

"Myconius was not disconcerted by this, but maintained from the Word of God that we must certainly render an opinion on the Bible and our faith before the whole world, and that the Word of God itself was the fitting judge; and here he cited a passage of Scripture from the Gospel according to St. John, but I am sorry to say that I can neither recollect the words nor where they are to be found."

"Was it not," interposed the young man who was seated beside Fichtner; "was it not the twelfth chapter of St. John, where our Saviour says: 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day?"

"Perfectly correct, my dear sir; that was it!" said the soldier, in glad surprise. "I am half inclined to believe that you were there, too. May I ask your name?"

"What!" exclaimed his nearest neighbor, "do you not know Master Veit Dietrich, our dear Doctor LUTHER'S private secretary, as well as his beloved friend?"

"You are Veit Dietrich?" continued the former, addressing him. "Well, I am overjoyed, Magister; and if I were not in the army of our most illustrious prince, I would like to take your place in serving our dear Doctor LUTHER with mouth and heart and pen and property, and even life, as you do. God bless you, Mr. Veit Deitrich; you are an honorable man!"

The blood rushed into the worthy youth's cheeks, and reddened them with the blush of modesty; he smiled deprecatingly, and slowly shook his head. "You flatter me," he said; "but will you not continue your narrative? What you now tell us has been reported to the doctor in a meagre and entirely different way, and he will be pleased if I can bring him so faithful an account."

"As I give it," replied the soldier, "so it all happened, I can assure you. As soon as our Myconius read the verse quoted from LUTHER'S translation, and the monk had ascertained this fact, he cried out: "The devil made this translation, and it is an abomination to a Catholic Christian.'

"He then attempted to show from the book of Deuteronomy that the priests had been commanded to decide controversies in matters of faith according to their own views. But our Myconius immediately showed that the monk was beating the air, by calling his attention to the beginning of the same chapter, in which the priests are bound to decide according to the divine law, and *not* according to their own individual views.

"On this the Franciscan became silent, and Myconius began to review in the light of Scripture the ten articles which the monk had presented as the door to salvation, especially the first two, which treated of the Church, of her superiority to the Bible, and of her exclusive right to explain the sacred oracles, and also of tradition, which he regarded as fully equal to Scripture. Our champion then overthrew these statements with such force by quotations from the Bible, that every one in his heart said yea and amen.

"Inasmuch as Myconius had quoted these passages in German according to our good Doctor LUTHER'S translation, which the monk had styled a work of the devil, he handed a copy of the Latin Bible to a learned man in the audience, who did not even sympathize with our side, requesting him to refer to the passages quoted in German, and if they did not correspond with the Latin, to make it known to the assembly. Korbach probably knew that this would not help him, and so gave way to rage and abuse, giving full vent to his venom, saying, among other things: 'Do you hear, Fritz, you are possessed of devils, and if I only had you alone somewhere, I would give you a sound thrashing.'" At these words loud laughter pealed through the whole room, in which all gradually joined. The voice from the audience was again heard, this time crying aloud: '*Dialectica Hochstratensis!*'

"I am not through yet," continued the narrator; "the enraged Franciscan pummeled Myconius awfully *with words*, reproached him with preaching at Dusseldorf without a call, with having taken a wife like all the other renegade heretic monks; and seemed to think that with such blows he would surely gain the victory, and put our dear Doctor MARTIN LUTHER into the pillory.

"Yes, the monk went so far as to charge Myconius with having incited, or at least encouraged, the uprising of the peasantry. But at this point, the noble Baron von Wildenfels took the part of our abused champion, and testified that Myconius had, on the contrary, dissuaded his hearers from revolt, and admonished them to Christian obedience towards the govern-

ment, adding that Muntzer and the other riotous preachers did not belong to the same religious school as Myconius."

"Yes, yes!" here broke in a voice, "Muntzer did much harm to our holy cause, and made us appear to be rebels against the government. If you build a church to the Lord, the devil promptly puts up his chapel close beside it."

"But the Lord is sure to tear it down again!" added the soldier, and then proceeded. "Now when Korbach could not rebut such honest testimony, he broached another controverted point, the invocation of the saints, and endeavored to prove it from Scripture. It was funny to see how the poor Franciscan turned the Bible back and forth, and yet could not find anything to suit his purpose. He became bewildered and confused, so that all laughed aloud, especially when he said he would bring the proofs some other time, for we all know there is nothing to be found in the Bible on the subject. This made the monk so exceedingly angry that he dropped the discussion, and cried out to Myconius: 'Tell me, Fritz, what is your faith!'

"And now, friends and brethren, now comes the glory of the gospel, the victory of our holy cause. The monk had hardly put this question, when Myconius arose full of the Holy Ghost, resembling Stephen when he was stoned, and confessed our faith as though it were Dr. MARTIN himself who spoke.

"I, myself, was assured of my faith by this sermon, and when I returned to my chamber, I wrote down from memory this glorious testimony in behalf of our divine cause; and when I learned that others had done

likewise, I compared my manuscript with theirs, and added what was wanting, and I can say truly that I have the sermon of Myconius just as it was delivered, and if you wish, I will read it."

"Certainly, Mr. Soldier," was the unanimous cry, "read it."

Then the young man drew a paper from his pocket and read to the attentive assembly:

"THE GOSPEL TESTIMONY OF FREDERICK MYCONIUS.

"FRIENDS AND GENTLEMEN: Since we are everywhere defamed as heretics, I pray you to give ear to the reason of our faith and hope. We confess that we are all sinners, with mind and desire inclined ever to evil, and opposed to the will of God. The law reproves our sin, and shows how far we are removed from the image of God as presented in his commandments. Conviction of sin is followed by sorrow, and fear of the divine judgment. Punishment is unavoidable, and there is no human remedy, for there is no other knowledge of the divine counsel as to His pardoning grace than that which he has revealed to us through His Son, whom he permitted to assume human nature. Our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed to us the grace of His heavenly Father, and teaches that he came to bring salvation to sinful man. Scripture bears witness that Christ took our sins upon Himself. This must be believed, and through this belief alone are our sins canceled. For Christ does not only take away our sins, but presents us with His victory, resurrection, righteousness, holiness, redemption, and other priceless possessions. All this we grasp by faith, and do not

doubt that through Christ we obtain redemption, holiness, justification, bliss, and the sonship of God.

"All these things we obtain by faith, and without faith we have none of them. This faith is followed by the gift of the *Holy Spirit*, who sheds abroad love in our hearts, so that we love God as a Father and obey Him willingly. He also commands us to love one another, even as he loved us. Hence the fruits of the Spirit flow from a willing heart, as St. Paul tells us in the fifth chapter of Galatians: for where the tree is not good or the faith not genuine, there is no spirit or faith in the heart, for if they were, they would produce their legitimate fruits, just as heat and light are the result of fire.

"All this is wrought in us by the *Gospel* and by the *Word of God*.

"As regards the SAINTS, they are of importance to us in two ways:

"First, our faith is strengthened by their example. For even as God regarded their faith, forgave their sins, and made them his children and heirs, so will he do unto us. To this end St. Paul cites the example of Abraham, Romans chap. iv., and of many others, Hebrews chap. ii.; but SALVATION is obtained through Christ *alone*, our sole Mediator. This is confirmed by all the *true* miracles.

"Again, the example of the saints shows us how to order our lives, subject finally to the rule of Christ's life. Therefore St. Paul says, 1 Corinthians chap. iv.: *Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ.* Thus we learn from the life of the saints patience in bearing the Cross of Christ, obedience, love, mercy, wherein the

saints did follow Christ, who themselves ask nothing of us but that we do precisely the same.

"We are deemed heretics because of our eating, since we do not keep the fasts; but listen to our reason. *Christ makes all food to be food of fasting*, as he tells us, Luke xxi.: 'And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.' And Paul requires temperance not simply on this or that day, but every day. This, then, is Christian fasting, when food and drink are used in moderation, and the mind is kept sober.

"All excess, whereby 'the heart is overcharged,' be it the eating of fish or other food, is contrary to Christ's command. Whatsoever entereth in at the mouth doth not defile a man; food does not make us acceptable to God; the kingdom of God is not meat and drink. To eat fish and bread, or to abstain therefrom, does not make a man a Christian.

"Thus Paul, 1 Timothy iv., places the prohibition of food as contrary to the Gospel, and one of the characteristics of false teachers. For this reason we avoid them, and do not fear to offend the weak, as everybody who will only use his reason is easily taught what is allowed before God, and what is not."

At this point the soldier finished his reading, and returned the paper to his pocket; the audience, which had sat motionless, drinking in this testimony of the Gospel with thirsty souls, now began to breathe freely.

"The same respectful silence was observed," continued the speaker, "at Dusseldorf when our Myconius was speaking, as you have just now exhibited while I was reading. And if, dear friends and brethren, you

have thus far had hard thoughts of the Franciscan Korbach, you will now feel kindly towards the poor monk, when I tell you what an impression this address made on *him*.

"Whilst Myconius spoke like an apostle gifted with tongues, I observed the monk closely, and noticed with heartfelt joy that the angry glances of his little eyes became less and less frequent, and his expression grew more and more humble and subdued.

"When Myconius had finished, Korbach arose, speaking in a tone hitherto strange to him: 'Friend Fritz, I have heard you with real pleasure, and we cannot find any fault with your address; I am pleased with every word of it; it is all true, and has a sure foundation. If this is a fair sample of your preaching, then you preach the true Christian doctrine.'

"The Baron von Wildenfels now said to the monk: 'My good man, you are inconsistent.'

"'Why, sir?' asked Korbach.

"'Because,' said the Baron, 'you said before, that this Fritz was a heretic, and all his doctrine heretical and devilish, but now you confess that it is true and Christian.'

"To this the monk replied, that he had been informed that Myconius taught error and blasphemed the Holy Mother of God and the saints, but now that he had heard the other side, he rejoiced at it, and would take Myconius' part wherever he went. 'However,' he continued, 'I pray you not to abuse me, or to pretend that I was vanquished, and that you will not regard this matter as a discussion, but simply as a conversation, since no judge was present.'

"Then Myconius answered: 'Dear brother, only teach the truth at all times; Christ will doubtless protect you from all disgrace, and we on our part wish to abuse no one.'

"That delighted the monk; and when Myconius had turned to the audience and called on them to bear witness that Korbach recognized the truths of the gospel, the humbled monk gave his hand to Myconius, also to the Elector, and the Baron von Wildenfels, and then went his way in peace.

"Thus you see that the gospel, the pure Word of God, is really and truly a pearl, for which one will give all that he hath, when once he recognizes its value."

So the soldier concluded his story and took part in the general conversation.

Leonard Fichtner now turned to his neighbor and said: "How glad I am to have arrived at so fortunate a juncture. I feel as though I were among the champions of Christendom!"

"The reason is that we have the great CAPTAIN of the army here," answered Veit Dietrich, with a smile.

"And the right weapons!" added the other, seriously, "shield and buckler and helmet, and above all, the two-edged sword, and the banner with the inscription: *By this sign thou shalt conquer!*"

Fichtner looked with cordial sympathy from one to the other of his neighbors at the table, and at length modestly addressing himself to the younger of the two, said:

"You will, dear sir, not put a bad construction on the request of a stranger. I have heard that you are the dear friend and companion of Doctor LUTHER.

Now I am come over a hundred miles to see this dear man of God. Tell me how I may be able to have a personal interview with him."

"Well," replied Veit Dietrich, smiling pleasantly, "you have only to rap at the door of the doctor's room, and straightway you will hear the words: 'Come in!'"

"And at what hour may this be done with propriety?" asked Fichtner further.

"I might almost answer," returned Dietrich, "at every hour and at no hour; for as long as I have been the doctor's secretary, I know of no leisure hour for him. His daily life, from early morn till night, is one constant work for the kingdom of God; and I, myself, could not be here now, if the doctor had not expressly told me that he wished a few hours private interview with Melanchthon. But I will gladly wait on you to-morrow, about an hour before noon, and announce you to the doctor."

Fichtner accepted this kind offer with heartfelt joy. The elder gentleman, who was still seated at the table, at this point remarked:

"You certainly speak our German language very neatly and with ease, yet I perceive from your speech that you were born and reared in another country. I do not wish to be inquisitive, but my ear and my eye seldom deceive me; you are from Italy, and possibly a brother artist?"

Whilst Fichtner was still in the dark as to the meaning of these words, Dietrich helped him out of the difficulty by saying:

"This is the honorable Master Lucas Kranach,

Electoral Chamberlain of our good city of Wittenberg!"

A bright beam of glad surprise lighted up the countenance of Fichtner, when he heard these welcome words. "Fortune overwhelms me with her gifts today," he cried. "Your name, honorable master, indeed reaches far beyond the confines of your country, and is spoken with praise even in our favored Italy. Had you painted no one but MARTIN LUTHER, your fame would last with LUTHER'S name and LUTHER'S cause. I will not deny it, honored Master Kranach, beautiful Milan is the city of my fathers, and you, too, are one of those men, for whose sake I have traveled to Wittenberg. If you deem wood-carving a sister art of painting, I may class myself among your pupils. If you would render my happiness complete, permit me to visit your studio."

"Come as often as you wish!" answered Kranach, as he held out his hand. "Whoever is a friend to our LUTHER, is also a friend to me."

Meanwhile the inn-keeper came up and informed his new guest that his supper was prepared, and his room ready for him. Fichtner wished his two neighbors a courteous good-night, and followed the landlord.

CHAPTER III.

THE TWO SISTERS.

"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."—Luke xvii. 20, 21.

THE impatience with which young Fichtner awaited the decision of the old wood-carver, drove him to Homberger's house at an earlier hour than under other circumstances would have been proper. When he knocked at the door of the sitting-room, he suddenly heard the confusion of surprised and subdued voices; just on the point of leaving, he heard the invitation: "Come in!" which he obeyed with a beating heart.

On entering he saw no one, but soon perceived that Margaret was present in the same place as on the day before, in the darkest corner of the room at her distaff.

"Take a seat, sir!" she said, politely, even before he had spoken a word of greeting. "Excuse my sister, she will soon be here."

"How do you know it is I?" asked Fichtner, in surprise.

"Your step informed me," she replied. "Please be seated. Father, I am told, has passed a restless night, and most likely has not yet arisen."

"Perhaps it would be better if I were to come again at a later hour!" said Fichtner, about to leave.

"No, please stay, sir!" returned the blind girl. "My sister requests you to wait for her."

"But I fear," remonstrated Fichtner, "that I have come too early in the day, and I would not like to be unwelcome a second time."

"No; certainly not, sir!" assured Margaret. "My sister has expressly directed me not to let you go away."

"You talk always of your sister!" said the young man. "Am I not here too early for you? or are you altogether indifferent as to whether your father will give me work or not?"

"Sir!" answered the girl, humbly, "to the blind nothing is too early or too late. We divide the day differently from those who can see. To us it is day when we are awake and night when asleep, and we know not whether that corresponds with your time or not unless you tell us."

"I know," replied Fichtner, "you rebuked me when I called you poor, and yet I cannot help it; I pity you from the bottom of my heart because you are deprived of the light of your eyes."

Margaret shook her head with a smile and said: "How you folks who have sight do judge and form opinions! It is true I do not see your world of which you constantly tell such wonderful things, and I do not see the splendor and magnificence which often, as you say, dazzles your eyes. I do not even know what you mean by saying that one thing or another blinds you for a time. To you it seems to be an evil, and yet I feel so well and so glad at the same time. Do you not think, sir, that we blind people have a world within us, which may possibly be more beautiful than yours, and that we have a light in us, which may shine more gloriously than your sun?"

"Oh, that can hardly be," replied Fichtner; "when my eyes behold a glorious landscape, lit up by the golden rays of the sun, I feel as though I was drinking in a draught of heaven! Miss Margaret," he added, impulsively, "the sun is a quickening life-picture."

"Perhaps for you," said the young woman, "but not for most other people. Why else should there be so many unhappy people among you, since they all see the sun?"

"Then you are never sad?" asked Fichtner, quickly.

"Oh no," said she. "I *hear* some things, 'tis true, which are said to make one sad; but I have never noticed that the world in my mind was changed by them. I always behold the same lovely picture of perfection, and it is always the Lord of heaven and earth, who hovers over it in such brilliance and glory that I am ever inclined to adoration. Often would I grasp it with my hands, but then a voice always says within me: Thou darest not; what can the sinful handmaid do in the presence of the Lord God! Alas, when I hear father, or sister, or a neighbor, tell how evil the world is, and that there is nothing in it to make one rejoice, then I think to myself: Poor people, could you only see *my* world, in which the folly and wickedness of man can change or destroy nothing!" But she quickly interrupted herself. "What foolish things I am saying to you, sir! You will call them silly dreams, as others do."

"What say you, Margaret?" cried Fichtner, with emotion. "Silly dreams! Yes, dreams I call them, but heavenly dreams, pictures of a blissful world. Go on Margaret. I feel as though an angel was telling

me how the world of the blessed looks. Now do I believe that you are never sad. And yet," he quickly interrupted himself, "are you really exalted above all human sorrow? Have you not a sympathizing heart? Do you not feel pain when others suffer? Do you really not know any of the pains which depress the human mind? Margaret, tell me, are you never, *never* sad? Is there nothing on earth which troubles you?"

Margaret bent her beautiful head lower and still lower, and was silent. The youth, urged by an irresistible impulse, approached the blind girl, and gently raised her head. And when he saw the pale cheeks covered with a fleeting crimson glow, and the quiet tears stealing forth from the sightless eyes, he cried out: "Margaret, you cannot deceive me! You, too, have your trouble, and a veil is spread before the heavenly picture within you, which conceals the glory of God from your inner vision. But as sure as I believe in a Saviour, you shall be freed from this suffering."

"Sir!" exclaimed the deeply agitated girl, as she shrank from his touch, "what right have you to disturb the peace of my heart?" But immediately she proceeded in a gentler tone, and almost like one praying for sympathy: "Say no more; how can you, a stranger, know what no one has told you?"

"Margaret!" the young man replied, "shall I tell you what your trouble is? *You are the despised and ill-treated daughter of the house!* That is the wound from which your soul bleeds. But, God helping me, this wound shall be healed!"

The blind girl shook her head slowly and sadly,

whilst burning tears flowed apace from her sightless eyes: "God is merciful," she said, as though speaking to herself. "He has kept the light from my eyes, but yet has left me tears. How happy I am in being able to weep. For many, many years this gracious gift was denied me."

Fichtner was about to continue, when he heard a door in the adjoining room open and close. This noise greatly disturbed the blind girl. Like one frightened out of a dream, she said:

"Sir, what have you been saying? Believe me, you are mistaken! I have your word of yesterday that you intend no evil against us; I rely on this! Give me your hand that you will injure no one in this house, do you hear?—*no one*, by word or by deed."

"Margaret," answered Fichtner, earnestly, "when the all-just and holy God speaks with His judgments, man cannot add or take away. But I give you my hand in token that whenever and wherever I speak in this house, I will only be the servant of my Master in heaven. Does that quiet your fears?"

"No, no," returned the blind girl, eagerly beseeching him, retaining his hand in her grasp the while. At this moment the door of the adjoining room was opened, and Fichtner hastily and with difficulty assumed a position which would be unlikely to excite suspicion.

It was Catharine who entered. She had adorned herself richly; glittering rings and bracelets shone on her hands and arms, a cap of green velvet with a gold border covered the top of her head and a part of her luxuriant blonde tresses; at her right side was the

handsome reticule suspended from two silver chains, indicating the authority and industry of the mistress of the house, whilst in her eyes and on her full, blooming face lay the smile of complaisance and of the most complete self-satisfaction.

"Pardon, Mr. Fichtner," she said pleasantly, "that I have kept you waiting; I welcome you in the name of my father."

"I am the one who should ask to be excused," replied the youth. "I now feel that I have entered here at an unseasonable hour; but my impatience is too great. May I hope to find employment in your house?"

"I believe you may hope," answered Catharine. "Father has indeed not yet expressed his decision; but from my knowledge of him, I judge that he will be more yielding to-day than yesterday."

"And whom have I to thank for this favorable change?" asked Fichtner. "Doubtless no one but yourself and your kind intercession."

Catharine cast down her eyes, as if embarrassed, though her expression showed that she was pleased with the compliment.

"Is it not a Christian duty," she said at length, in a low voice, "to help our fellow-men?"

"Certainly," replied Fichtner; "but you do not even know me. You really do not know whether you are granting your favor to a worthy or an unworthy person; whether you may not repent your Christian intercession."

"Sir," exclaimed the maiden, as if in jest, "I hope you are not a heretic!" Hardly had this word passed

her lips when a blush of shame mantled her cheeks. "I wished to say," she quickly added, "I trust you are a Christian!"

"Yes, with all my soul!" returned the youth. "But although you have yourself explained your words, permit me to ask you, Who and what would I have to be to deserve the name of *heretic?*"

"Well," answered Catharine, now really embarrassed, "I only wished to say that you, being an image-carver, like my father, are, I trust, like him a faithful adherent of our holy mother Church. This man LUTHER has turned the heads of many in our midst."

"And their hearts, too," said Fichtner, promptly. "But I see that this expression does not please you. Be assured then that I am with all my heart a Christian, and that I heard mass early yesterday morning. Receive my heartiest thanks for your kind words in my behalf."

Catharine avoided making any further reply to this. "You did not," she said, "partake of the repast hastily prepared for you yesterday; to-day I may hope that you will not disdain a morning meal. I am only fulfilling my father's orders. I shall be here with you shortly. Margaret, set the table." And without waiting for an answer, she quickly left the room.

Margaret arose from her seat without delay, went with a sure step to a table which stood near a window, took a clean cloth and the needed dishes from the cupboard, and set three covers as neatly as one who could see, and all this quietly and faithfully, like a servant-girl carrying out the orders of her mistress.

Fichtner regarded the blind girl with an expression

of heartfelt sympathy. And now he first became aware how poorly she was clad. A garment of coarse gray cloth covered her from the shoulder to the ankle; it resembled the penance-garb of a nun. This was her whole dress; there was no ornament whatever, save her dark, abundant hair, shedding a truly silvery radiance, and falling over her shoulders in full curls, half-covering her back. Without a word, she passed by Fichtner to her place in the corner.

The young man could not restrain himself; as she was passing him, he seized her hand and said: "Margaret, have my words quieted your fears?"

"We are under God's protection!" she answered, quietly.

"And is God's sun now shining in your world?" he asked.

She made no reply, but covering her sightless eyes with her other hand, returned with tottering gait to her place.

The door now opened, and Catharine stepped in again, like a rising sun. She bore upon a bright waiter some food, placed it on the table, then took a can filled with wine out of the lower part of the cupboard, and said most affably: "Now, Mr. Fichtner, make up for yesterday's misunderstanding. Father will be here presently."

"May I ask you a question, honored miss?"

"And what may that be?" asked Catharine, blushing.

"I see, returned the former, "that the table is set with three covers. Are there not *four* of us, when your father comes? Have you not a sister?"

"Ah," answered Catharine, promptly, and entirely at her ease, "you mean Margaret! The poor girl is blind, and is of little use in the house. She has her place there at the stove, which she does not like to leave, and we let her have her own way. Still, if you desire it—Margaret, will you sit here with us?"

"No, Catharine!" answered the blind girl.

"You see, sir," Catharine continued, "my poor sister is so accustomed to her quiet corner, that she prefers to remain there. But I hear father coming."

Old Mr. Homberger entered; the disturbed countenance, the sunken eyes, and the withered skin of his otherwise full cheeks, and a slow, unsteady step, bore sure testimony of a restless night. He answered Fichtner's polite salutation in a not over-friendly manner, and glanced furtively at the young man, as though he did not care to look him full in the face. "My Catharine," he said, "has prepared you a breakfast. Be seated and be content with our *German customs*."

The master emphasized this word with unmistakable bitterness; Fichtner pretended not to hear the remark. "Do not blame me, venerable master," he said," "but if you wish me to enjoy your kind offer, let me first know my fate; grant my earnest desire, and tell me that I may be your pupil."

"Your importunity is not agreeable to me," returned Homberger; "what if I tell you that I have no work?"

"Oh, but you have, dear father!" Catharine interposed quickly, and in a coaxing, flattering tone. "You have," she continued, stroking his wrinkled

brow, "you have the altar with the fourteen holy helpers to make, and you need assistance. Only yesterday you complained of your eyes, which are no longer keen enough for such fine work."

"Foolish child," said the father, although in a tone not in the least intended to express harshness. Here he again cast a sidelong glance at the young man; but as though a dread recollection drawn from the latter's face spoke to his heart and conscience, he quickly cast down his weary eyes again, and said: "I do not deny that I am loth to admit you to my workshop; nor do I promise you as yet. However, for a week or two you may remain here."

"I am deeply grateful for even this brief period," said Fichtner, "and although I know that I am indebted for this favor solely to the intercession of your daughter, I will accept it as though you had put some confidence in the kind recommendation of your old friend Urban, of Augsburg."

"Be seated, be seated!" cried Homberger, instead of replying to the question. "You will excuse me. I have no desire for meat or drink. Catharine will give you all the information you need. To-day, however, I do not wish you to begin; to-morrow—to-morrow!" With these words he left the room.

"Your father seems ill!" now said Fichtner, taking a seat on Catharine's repeated invitation, and partaking of the proffered meal.

"There are times when he feels the approach of old age!" replied Catharine. "But he will soon be himself again. If you do not deem me impertinent, I would ask you to tell me whence you come and where

you have your home, and whether your father and mother are still living?"

"My dear father is still living, thanks to God!" answered the youth, "and I am here with his full consent. We buried my mother two years ago. Death released her from severe suffering."

"And your home!" inquired Catharine further.

"What do you call home?" asked Fichtner, evasively. "Has the bird a home, which to-day seeks its rest in one tree and to-morrow in another?"

"Holy Mary!" cried the girl, alarmed, "you are surely not an outlaw?"

"Would that frighten you?" asked Fichtner, with a smile. "Is not the bird happy which takes its flight whither it will? Truly, though my heart feels the guilt and burden of sin, yet am I not an outlaw. My conscience is not burdened by crime."

"Your language is somewhat mysterious, sir!" said Catharine. "Why do you not ask for absolution, if your sins oppress you? Holy Mother Church is rich in grace, and imposes no heavier penance than is absolutely necessary."

"And does *that* end the matter?" asked Fichtner. "I once saw a smith plunge a red-hot iron into cold water; and the iron became colder and harder than it was before. I thought to myself: a frightened and disturbed conscience is like that piece of iron. As long as it is heated, it certainly is in pain, but pain has its good side too, and keeps awake the fear of God; and since fear alone can not do the work, but love must intervene, which removes fear, it were certainly better not to dip the burning conscience into cold water, which

makes it harder than before—better to have an oil which soothes the burn, but still keeps the conscience tender and warm. And I believe there is such an oil."

"I do not understand you!" returned Catharine, impatiently.

At the same moment a voice was heard from the corner: "Ah, how precious these words are!"

"Margaret," cried her sister, with anger, "what do you mean? You always act as though you were sitting there asleep, and yet you hear every word. Father's bed is not made yet. I think you had better go now, before father becomes angry."

"Can your poor sister do such work?" asked Fichtner. "I should think that it was better suited to one who had the use of her eyes."

"I hope you do not mean that *I* should attend to it," cried Catharine, with a smile of wonder. "Besides, Margaret would by no means permit this. Is it not so, Margaret? *You* would not wish it, would you?"

"No, Catharine!" answered the blind girl, calmly. "I shall go at once." Saying this, she arose to leave the room.

The young man's heart began to swell. "Were I in your place, Miss Catharine," he resumed, "I would relieve my poor sister of this work. It is true you are finely dressed, and could not becomingly perform household work in such an attire; still—"

"I see clearly," Catharine interrupted him indignantly, "our blind Margaret has aroused your sympathy. She understands this art very well, although at other times she pretends to be so awkward and silly."

"Miss Catharine," exclaimed Fichtner, seriously and with dignity, "would you ridicule the sympathy which the all-merciful God permits the hearts of those who are blessed with sight, to respond to the lifeless glances of eyes that are blind? Catharine, you are the very one in need of the oil of which I spoke. You have plunged your heart and conscience into the cold water —there they have both become hard. Beware of the powerful hand of HIM, who is able to kindle a fire which the coldest water can not quench."

Having thus spoken, he quickly left the room, leaving the sisters strongly moved, although the cause and effect of the emotion differed in each.

CHAPTER IV.

LUTHER WITH HIS FAMILY.

"Giving honor to the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." 1 Pet. iii. 7.

AT the appointed hour, Fichtner entered the Augustinian convent, in which LUTHER had his home. In the hall he met the secretary, Veit Dietrich, who was just about to leave.

"Well, you have really come!" he exclaimed, extending his hand in welcome. "I have informed the doctor of your coming, and he expects you. He is very likely to be found in his family room; do not be afraid to go right to it."

Fichtner's heart was beating loudly. He had not yet seen the man whose name was mentioned throughout the whole of Europe—yes, even in the countries of Asia—at times with fear and trembling, and with imprecations, and again with burning hope and fervent benedictions. He felt as though, burdened with guilt, he was about to appear before a judge who could see into the recesses of his heart, and he had to call up all his courage to knock at the door which the secretary had just pointed out.

Within he heard a manly voice speaking to some one in a cordial, kindly tone, and was on the point of thinking that his knock had not been heard, when

the same voice called out: "Come in, whoever you are."

When Fichtner entered he saw a man in a black dressing-gown with broad flaps, and with a child riding on his knee, held by both hands, and laughing heartily at the irregular jumps of the wild horse.

"Will you ride with us, sir?" cried LUTHER, with a smile, to the newcomer, and without waiting for his greeting. "My little Hans is riding straight to Rome to present his father's compliments to the pope. When he sees the child I should think his very heart must laugh for joy. No one save a father and mother knows how great a joy such a dear child is, of whom vulgar, stubborn heads are not worthy. Yes, Hans," he continued, stroking the child's round, full cheeks, "you are our Lord's little goose; you are under his grace and the forgiveness of sins, not under the law; you are not afraid, you are safe and troubled about nothing. The evil you do is done in innocence! Do you remember," he said, turning to Fichtner, "the words of the divine patron of children, 'Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven!'"

"Yes, reverend doctor!" answered the young man, and his speech trembled with admiration and almost holy awe before the man who had shaken the half of Christendom, so that popes and emperors feared him, and who was here the humblest servant of his own child—"Yes, I know the verse, and would like to become such a child."

"Then you also comprehend," continued LUTHER, "that such a foolish child is to be preferred to a wise

man. I have only learned to understand this language aright, since I behold the simplicity and innocence of children in my own flesh and blood. The faith and life of children is the best of all, for they have nothing but the word; to this they hold fast, honoring God in simplicity, and believing all his promises to be sure. But we old fools have grief of the heart and the fire of hell: we spend our time in disputing about the Word which they, the little children, believe with pure faith, without doubting, and in simplicity. But look, sir," interrupting himself, "little Hans is now in Rome, and wishes to dismount!"

Whilst he was setting the child down on the floor, a young woman, clad in a simple home dress, entered by a side-door.

The boy immediately extended his arms and toddled towards his mother with uncertain step.

"There you have the ungrateful little fellow, dear Katy!" he said to his wife with a smile. "I was good enough to serve as his horse for half an hour, and now he runs to you without thinking of the horse's pay. It is a true saying, 'If father and mother contend about a child, the father goes away empty.' I think that for this reason the dear Lord commanded Abraham, the *father*, to offer up his only and dearly beloved son Isaac; Sarah, the *mother*, would not have done it."

"And would *you* have done it, dear husband?" asked his wife, as she took a seat and drew the chubby boy on her lap and tenderly kissed him.

"Well, well, dear Katy!" said LUTHER. "That is a very sharp thorn which you press into my heart. I

think, however, that I would have argued with the Lord if he had made such a proposition and expected obedience of me."

"And I cannot," continued the wife, "get the idea into my head that God could demand so cruel a thing of us as to put one's own child to death."

LUTHER glanced at his wife with a serious but kindlly expression, and said: "Dear Katy, can you believe that God would allow his only begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to die for us, when he had nothing dearer in heaven and on earth than this beloved Son? And yet he permits him to be crucified, and to die the shameful death of the cross! Were we inclined to judge such wondrous things of God by our human reason, we would be compelled to say that God showed himself much more fatherly and affectionate to Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod, and others, from whom he did not require such difficult tasks, than towards his only-begotten Son."

"You are right, dear husband!" replied his wife. "But you said yourself that the *mother* would not have done it, and it may have proved hard enough for the father."

"Yes, yes," proceeded the master of the house, "the patriarch undoubtedly ascended Mount Moriah with a heavy step and a throbbing heart, and I believe that he did not tell Sarah anything about it. But yet he did what God commanded, or at least intended to do it."

"What *could* have been his comfort in this cruel work?" asked the mother. "My heart trembles whenever I think of it."

"It can hardly be otherwise," answered LUTHER,

"than that Abraham believed his dearly beloved son Isaac would arise from the dead when he was ordered to offer him up, concerning whom he had the promise that through him the Messiah of the world should be born. This is proved by the Epistle to the Hebrews. But I will not argue with you, dear Katy, and willingly admit that the dear Lord would have to give me stringent orders before I would consent to smite our little Hans with this hand of mine; and especially on this day of all days, the anniversary of the boy's birth. Do you know, Katy, that the Holy Scriptures call a wife the delight and joy of her husband's eyes? When you laid little Hans in my arms this day a year ago, I remembered of having said: 'A woman is a poor creature;' but then for the first time I learned that a woman has the greatest honor in the world, for we are all born of women; and that the Son of God too was himself born of a woman, is no light praise for the estate of holy wedlock. When Eve was brought to Adam, full of the Holy Spirit, he gave her a gloriously beautiful name, and called her *Heva*, that is, the mother of all the living. He does not call her *his wife*, but A MOTHER. There, dear Katy, you have in your child the most exalted jewel, and honor, and ornament of woman."

"Do not commend me too highly, doctor!" said the good lady of the house with a smile; "your praise might make me proud."

"Not at all, Katy!" said LUTHER. "A pious heart will not permit pride to enter it. You have been given to me by God as a pious wife, and you are dearer to me than the kingdom of France and the dominion of Venice."

"And you are so considerate of my faults and failings," rejoined his wife. "I know full well that I often try your patience sorely."

"Let that rest, dear Katy!" said LUTHER. "I am Adam's child as well as yourself; and when disputes and differences now and then arise in wedded life, that is due to the weakness and wickedness of our corrupt nature. The devil takes advantage of this, and blocks the way on both sides with hatred and envy, suspicion and mistrust, and evil desires, so that there is mutual bitterness. From this, however, the dear Lord has graciously preserved us. I too, like Paul, will glory in myself for once. Katy, you have a pious husband, who loves you, hence you, like other godly women, are an empress; appreciate this fact, and be thankful to God."

"Certainly, my dear good sir, I do this from the bottom of my heart," replied the wife. "It is certainly, as you have often said, the highest favor of God, that married people should be sincerely attached to each other, and willingly excuse each other's faults."

"We dare not desire to fare better than our ancestors!" said LUTHER, smiling. "Adam and Eve doubtless scolded each other bravely during their nine hundred years of wedded life, and Eve probably said to Adam: '*You* ate the apple,' and Adam may have answered: 'Why did you give it to me?' For in the long course of their life they probably experienced much care and trouble in their married estate, together with many a heart-sorrow. We are no better than our fathers, Katy! But," here LUTHER broke off and turned to his guest heartily, "whilst what I have been saying

may be praiseworthy as coming from a husband and father, I have not acted as a gentleman and a Christian. I have treated you with impoliteness. I have not yet bid you welcome, and have acted as though you were not present. You are no doubt the stranger from Milan, in whose praise my dear Veit spoke so highly, telling me of your excellent behavior as you sat beside him and my dear friend Lucas, and listened so devoutly to the story of the Franciscan Korbach and my faithful Myconius."

Fichtner blushed modestly when he heard such kindly words concerning himself. "Reverend doctor," he said, "if your good secretary has really praised me so much, he has not done well. I cannot even say with St. Paul: 'I glory in my weakness.'"

"That is praiseworthy and Christian language!" said LUTHER, "and although I can not well bear to see young folks look too sedate, like old people, but prefer to see them step out somewhat boldly, yet there is a mean in all things, and modesty well becomes a young man."

In the meantime Mistress Katy had made a move to leave the room, and to take little Hans with her. But the child wished to remain behind, and began to cry lustily; and when it would not, child-like, permit itself to be quieted, but began to cry all the louder, LUTHER said: "Wait, Hans, we will drive out the evil spirit."

With this he reached for his lute, which stood in one corner of the room, gave it a few touches, and the child at once became quiet.

"Do you see," he said to Fichtner, "what a glorious gift of God music is! As it dispels the child's tears,

so it drives away the devil and makes men glad. Are you, too, an admirer of Dame Music?"

"Yes, doctor," replied Fichtner, with a pleased countenance.

"And can you play on the lute?" was LUTHER'S next question. The young man answered in the affirmative, and LUTHER, greatly delighted, proceeded: "You have come just at the right time. We will quiet Hans in a trice. Have you heard about the two Christian martyrs at Brussels? I have put the story into verse, and composed the music for it; and as my Katy has not yet heard it, you may assist me in playing the melody."

Hastening into a small adjoining room, LUTHER speedily returned, bringing a large volume. He opened this, and like a happy child whose dearest heart's desire is about to be gratified, handed the lute to the young man, and said: "Now, my friend from Milan, strike the strings as though you were King David himself. You need not sing: I'll do that. And you, dear Katy, and little Hans, are to play the part of an attentive audience, and make sweet melody in your hearts."

Fichtner took the lute, and in a masterly manner began with confidence and expression the short prelude. LUTHER'S full and powerful voice poured forth the words of the song:

By help of God I fain would tell
A new and wondrous story,
And sing a marvel that befell
To His great praise and glory.
At Brussels in the Netherlands
He hath His banner lifted,

To show His wonders by the hands
Of two youths highly gifted
With rich and heavenly graces.

One of these youths was callèd John,
And Henry was the other;
Rich in the grace of God was one,
A Christian true his brother;
For God's dear Word they shed their blood,
And from the world departed
Like bold and pious sons of God;
Faithful and lion-hearted,
They won the crown of martyrs.

The old Arch-fiend did them immure,
To terrify them seeking;
They bade them God's dear Word abjure,
And fain would stop their speaking;
From Louvain many Sophists came,
Versed deeply in the schools,
And met together at the game;
The Spirit made them fools—
They could not but be losers.

"Doctor," said Fichtner at this point, "if you will permit me the honor, I would like to join in the singing."

"Well, then, play and sing both," cried LUTHER, joyously. "I see already I have found my master in you."

Fichtner's beautiful tenor voice now took up the strain:

Now sweet, now harsher tones they tried,
In artifice abounding;
The youths did firm as rock abide,
The Sophists all confounding.

The enemy waxed fierce in hate,
And for their life-blood thirsted;
He fumed and chafed that one so great
Should by two babes be worsted,
And straightway sought to burn them.

Their monkish garb from them they take,
And gown of ordination;
The youths a cheerful Amen spake,
And showed no hesitation.
They thanked their God that by His aid
They now had been denuded
Of Satan's mock and masquerade,
Whereby he had deluded
The world with false pretences.

Thus by the power of grace they were
True priests of God's own making,
Who offered up themselves e'en there,
Christ's holy orders taking;
Dead to the world, they cast aside
Hypocrisy's sour leaven,
That penitent and justified
They might go clean to heaven,
And leave all monkish follies.

Thus far LUTHER had listened most attentively; but suddenly he grasped his flute and said: "I cannot keep silent while such excellent music is being discoursed. Up, you master from Milan, strike and sing to the delight of God's dear angels; I will resume my part."

Raising the flute to his lips, his masterly notes swelled the stream of harmonious sounds as Fichtner continued to sing:

They then were told that they must read
A note which was dictated;
They straightway wrote their faith and creed,
And not one jot abated.

Now mark their heresy! "We must
In God be firm believers,
In mortal man not put our trust,
For they are all deceivers;"
For this they must be burned.

Two fires were lit; the youths were brought,
But all were seized with wonder,
To see them set the flames at naught,
And stood as struck with thunder;
With joy they came in sight of all,
And sang aloud God's praises;
The Sophists' courage waxèd small,
Before such wondrous traces
Of God's almighty finger.

The scandal they repent, and would
Right gladly gloss it over;
They dare not boast their deed of blood,
But seek the stain to cover,
They feel the shame within their breast,
And charge therewith each other;
But now the Spirit cannot rest,
For Abel 'gainst his brother
Doth cry aloud for vengeance.

Their ashes never cease to cry,
The fires are ever flaming,
Their dust throughout the world doth fly,
Their murderers' shame proclaiming.
The voices which with cruel hands,
They put to silence living,
Are heard, though dead, throughout all lands,
Their testimony giving,
And loud hosannahs singing.

From lies to lies they still proceed,
And feign forthwith a story,
To color o'er the murderous deed;
Their conscience pricks them sorely.

These saints of God, e'en after death
They slandered, and asserted
The youths had with their latest breath
Confessed and been converted,
Their heresy renouncing.

"That is the devil, who speaks such things out of the mouths of the papists," here cried LUTHER with a loud voice. "No one has ever yet ascended the burning pile for Christ's sake, and come down a denier of his Lord. Let them carry on their evil cause with falsehood and deceit: we know all the time that the devil is the father of lies." Laying aside his flute, he sang in unison with Fichtner, and in a tone of exalted triumph:

Then let them still go on and lie,
They cannot win a blessing;
And let us thank God heartily,
His Word again possessing;
Summer is even at our door,
The winter now hath vanished,
The tender flowerets spring once more,
And He, who winter banished,
Will send a happy summer.

"Once more Amen!" repeated LUTHER, whilst a fire shone from his eyes, as from one who is full of the Holy Spirit. "Our opponents *must* approve of our doctrine even against their will; yea, the fact and truth is visible, manifest in the clear light of day, and no sensible man can deny it. Their lies are now, thanks to God! exposed and brought to light, so that every one who is not utterly blind can detect them."

But Fichtner, who was still occupied with the thoughts contained in the song, now asked: "And is this really true, doctor?"

"It is the sad truth," replied LUTHER. "Four years ago, on the first of July, in the year twenty-three, this happened at Brussels, where two brothers of my Order, I mean two Augustinian friars, and soon after a third, were burned at the stake because of their Christian confession. But now the time has come of which Solomon speaks: 'The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.' But," he continued, turning to Fichtner, "you are quite an able master of the noble art of music."

"I cultivate it as a gift of God!" said Fichtner.

"That is right!" cried LUTHER. "The devil does not stay long where music is cultivated. Music is the best solace for a sad heart; by it the heart is made content, is quickened and refreshed. Music is a gentle teacher; she makes men more mild and meek, more courteous and polite. Yes, my dear master from Milan, music is a beautiful, a glorious gift of God, and I assign to it the very first place after Theology. I am but a poor musician myself, and when I hear the lovely songs of *some* composers, I know that I could not produce such beautiful psalms, not even to save my life. Of course, those same musicians cannot preach on the psalter as I can. Yet would I not like to give up my poor knowledge of music for something great."

In the meantime, little Hans had left the room with his mother, willingly, and without any resistance. Fichtner seemed to have waited for this opportunity, for he now turned to LUTHER, and said: "Reverend doctor, you have received me, a stranger, as a child of

your own house! Ah! you do not know how deeply I appreciate the honor. But there is a heavy burden resting on my heart and conscience, which only you and your advice can remove from my soul. Would you grant me a brief hour, so that I can pour out my heart before you?"

"If I can advise and aid you, it shall be done cheerfully," answered LUTHER; and invited his guest to follow him to his study.

CHAPTER V.

LEONARD FICHTNER.

"The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come." Hosea ix. 7.

"PERMIT me, doctor," began the young man, when they had entered LUTHER'S study, "permit me in the first place to tell you about myself and my dear parents. Veit Dietrich told the truth when he called me a Milanese. I was born and reared in the beautiful city of Milan."

"I know your native city well!" LUTHER interrupted the narrator. "When I was there, seventeen years ago, the priests forbade my reading mass; they held that the Germans read mass as prescribed by St. Gregory, but that the Milanese followed the rule of St. Ambrose. The poor people! They dispute about Gregory and Ambrose, and at the same time pass by the Lord Christ! But proceed."

"My father," continued Fichtner, "by name Andrea Pinetta, is still living, and is a capable and expert goldsmith, whom God has blessed abundantly with this world's goods. My dear mother died in the Lord two years ago, and I promised her on her death-bed to make a pilgrimage to Wittenberg, especially to see and hear you, doctor, and she conscientiously told me all I now communicate to you."

"That is, indeed, for once, a fine report from Italy!" exclaimed LUTHER. "God bless your mother! The

land of the Epicureans, in all likelihood, contains but few like her!"

"At the time," proceeded Fichtner, "when my dear mother was engaged to my father, there came to Milan a German, a carver of images, whose master's workshop was directly opposite the house, in which the parents of my good mother lived. This German was a man of handsome mien and distinguished manners, and was named Andrew Homberger."

"What!" exclaimed LUTHER, "is that the image-carver, Homberger, on Coswig street?"

"The same, doctor," assented Fichtner.

"Demetrius the second, as my dear Philip calls him!" continued LUTHER. "Do you know that this Homberger is the bitterest enemy and opponent I have in Wittenberg? The poor man clings to the papacy, as the goldsmith Demetrius, at Ephesus, adhered to paganism. Demetrius would probably have become a Christian, if the small silver temples of Diana had not brought him so much money; in like manner old Homberger might incline to the Gospel, if by such a course he would only not lose his customers for papistic images of the Virgin Mary! The poor fool! His glory consists in knowing how to carve a beautiful statue of the Virgin Mary out of a rough block, before whom the poor people then fall down in adoration. In this matter we have indeed touched his heart and his purse."

"Homberger," again resumed Fichtner, "contrived to procure admission to the house of my mother, and gave unmistakable evidence of his design to win my mother for himself, and to turn her away from her

betrothed bridegroom. But as soon as she and her parents perceived this, they refused to admit the German to the house."

"Very good," said LUTHER, "but do you know what your mother's feelings were toward him?"

"She told me," was Fichtner's reply, "that her feelings toward him were at first of respect; that she esteemed him as a skillful and well-mannered workman, but was altogether alarmed when she recognized his designs, for she loved my father with heartfelt affection. And it came to pass that Homberger was exasperated at being forbidden the house, and was filled with hatred and feelings of revenge against my father; and to be brief, one evening when my father had paid a visit to my grandparents, he was attacked on his way home by Homberger, who dealt him a blow with his dagger that felled him to the ground."

"May God help us!" exclaimed LUTHER in horror. "Then this man Homberger bears the blood-mark of Cain on his brow."

"My poor father," resumed Fichtner, "was taken up for dead and borne away; but by a miracle his life was spared. The wound was deep and dangerous, and not until the third day did the surgeon declare that there was hope of his recovery."

"Murder is murder!" said LUTHER. "Homberger is a murderer, whether your father lived or died. And does the unfortunate man know this?"

"No," replied the young man. "He must have left Milan the same night, for no one there saw him again; and although for years efforts were made to find his retreat, it was never discovered. At first my dear

parents entertained bitter thoughts toward the German journeyman, but gradually dislike and aversion were changed into compassion. It now happened that your theses against the Romish errors, which ten years ago went out into all the world, became known to nearly everybody in Milan, and found many secret and open friends and adherents. Among the crowds of readers were my dear parents, and especially my good mother, whom those words of yours, doctor, had brought to quite a new knowledge of Christian doctrine. Indeed, it happened that my blessed mother was filled with such a desire to obtain a better understanding of the Gospel, that she earnestly wished to persuade my father to emigrate to Germany, as there was no hope for a pure gospel worship in Milan or anywhere in Italy, on account of the mad and unreasoning rage against you and your doctrine which possessed the Roman Catholics."

"Yes," said LUTHER, "the thoughts, plans and resolves of all the papists have this object in view, rather to let the Church perish, than not to wipe out the Lutheran imposters, as they call us. But God has thus far broken their counsels and brought their designs to naught. The Italian papists in particular despise and condemn other nations, although they are themselves an abomination before God because of their impiety and pride. Their fasts are more splendid and more prodigal than our grandest feasts. I have always counseled young journeymen, after they have learned their catechism and were instructed in God's Word, to visit Italy, in order to learn the trickery and rascality of the people, so that they may be able to guard themselves against it."

"Alas! you speak the truth, reverend doctor," exclaimed Fichtner.

"And all the divine judgments are of no avail," continued LUTHER, earnestly. "It is but a few months since the Lord God flourished the rod of his righteous wrath over the Sodomitic city of Rome, and caused the Duke of Bourbon, with a petty army, to storm it so summarily, that the pope barely escaped, and took refuge in the Fortress of St. Angelo. God save us all, how much blood was shed there! But of what use has this judgment of God's wrath been? *This* has been the effect: the pope has only a few weeks ago issued a bull against the *Lutheran heretics*, and charged these same *Lutheran heretics* with having brought such trouble on Rome, and accused all Lutherans of being robbers, rioters, and incendiaries. I would not take one hundred thousand guilders for the privilege of having seen Rome, although I have obtained by no means a full knowledge of its great and shameful abominations.

"When first I saw the city, I fell on the ground, raised my hands, and said: 'I salute thee, thou holy Rome! Yes, truly holy, because of the sainted martyrs and their blood, which was there shed.' But this holiness has departed ever since the pope rules the miserable city."

"May I proceed with my narrative, reverend doctor?" asked Fichtner.

"Yes, by all means," replied the doctor. "I take an earnest interest in this Homberger; truly, the ways of the Lord, by which he saves a poor soul, are mysterious. Pardon my wrath, but when I think of Rome,

I always feel as though a giant's hand had hold of my heart. The impenitence of Rome has brought every misfortune upon the world."

"The older I became," Fichtner now proceeded, "the more clearly did my mother reveal her wish to me. Although she was innocent of any culpability, yet her conscience was not at rest; she reproached herself with possibly having been too harsh towards the German, and thus having incited him to the crime, when kind language might have convinced him of his folly,"

"Your good mother troubled herself unnecessarily, my young friend," rejoined LUTHER. "Such love as Homberger's cannot be cured by mere words, unless the man has first become convinced of his sinfulness, and has proved his heart, and become aware how he has been blinded and depraved by original sin. It is the penalty of original sin that poor human nature cannot by its own strength attain to the knowledge of God, or even desire such knowledge. Hence it is that man does not know his neighbor, does not care for him, does him even harm, puts him to death by violence; and further, that man does not know himself, cares only for himself, for his own interest, seeks only his own, and nearly always does this at the expense and injury of another. In fine, unless a man have faith, he cannot repent."

"My sainted mother," said Fichtner further, "had not indeed this knowledge; she tormented herself with bitter sorrow, and adhered to the conviction that she was called to save poor Homberger's soul. Now it happened at a certain time that another German jour-

neyman, also an image-carver, came to Milan, made my father's acquaintance, and was able to give some information about Homberger, that he was yet alive and pursuing his calling at Wittenberg. When my mother had learned this, she no longer had any rest, and she then for the first time told me *all* these circumstances I have just related to you. It was determined that I, too, was to become an image-carver, was to learn the German language and travel to Wittenberg, become an inmate of Homberger's house, inform him in due time of what followed on his wicked deed, and bring him the assurance that my dear parents had long since forgiven him. I consented willingly to all this, more especially because I could in this way quench my thirst for a better knowledge of the gospel, and live near you, honored sir. My dear mother lived and died under the impression that her share in Homberger's guilt could only be blotted out when this man's heart had been sincerely reconciled with God and man."

"That is a praiseworthy Christian resolve," said LUTHER, "although your mother—may she be at rest in God!—burdened her conscience uselessly. We are justified by faith, and not by the works of the law; and if my own soul's salvation depended on the conversion and salvation of all those who have sinned against me by hatred and evil speaking, then I myself would probably never be saved, and the pope would have the power to destroy me together with himself. Therefore mark this, my dear friend, Satan torments consciences chiefly *by the law*, and pictures Christ to them as a stern, strict judge, and says: 'God is the

enemy of sinners, for He is just. Thou art a sinner, therefore God is thine enemy.' Thus conscience is smitten and bound hand and foot."

"But, Doctor," was Fichtner's anxious interruption, "is not this right?—and can any one silence the voice of conscience?"

"*Christ* can," replied LUTHER, promptly. "God is not the enemy of all sinners, but only of those who are impious and impenitent sinners, and persecutors of His Word. For just on account of poor, weak sinners, who have come to a knowledge of their sins and who acknowledge them, is Christ come, that they might be saved. For as sin is twofold, in like manner is righteousness of two kinds. The law, when it does its best and is used at its best, can accomplish nothing more than help us to come to a knowledge of our sins, and make us fear death. But where the dread of sin and death, and of God's wrath and judgment, is felt, *there* surely is no righteousness, nothing heavenly and divine, but simply the essence of worldliness. Hence it is clear as noonday, that the law can effect nothing that is life-giving, saving, heavenly or divine, but what it does effect is purely of a worldly character; and it only furnishes the knowledge of what is evil in this world, both external and spiritual."

"There would then be no need of the law?" asked Fichtner.

"O no, dear friend," rejoined LUTHER. "The law is given to urge conscience by its terrors to long for the divine promise, and to seek Christ. The law is also a light which makes visible and manifest, not indeed the grace of God, nor that righteousness whereby one ob-

tains everlasting life and bliss, but the law only reveals sin, our weakness, death, the wrath and judgment of God. This is the right and proper work of the law; here it ceases, and further it cannot go. But the *gospel* is quite a different light, one which illuminates, quickens, comforts, and helps the terrified heart out of its trouble. For the gospel shows how God is gracious to unworthy and lost sinners for Christ's sake, if they believe that they are redeemed through his death, and that through his victory and triumph the blessing is presented to them, that is, grace, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and everlasting life. If we make this distinction between the law and the gospel, we assign the right and proper work and office which is due to each."

"Alas!" cried the young man with emotion, "why was this comfort denied to my poor mother in her dying moments? When we tried to comfort her according to our own weakness and ignorance, by telling her that those are saved who keep the commandments of God, she answered: 'That is not real consolation; *that cannot be so;* that burns, but does not relieve. Tell me about CHRIST—*that* will refresh my soul.' Yes, our poor hearts felt that the true comfort was wanting, but we could not give what we ourselves did not possess. May God have given our good mother the bliss of heaven!"

"Amen, amen," added LUTHER, and pressed the young man's hand in hearty sympathy.

After a pause, Fichtner resumed: "I have now come hither to perform the vow made to my sainted mother, and have found that her fears were true. The

house where Homberger lives is an unhappy one. Every word which proceeds from his mouth bears witness to the power of an evil conscience, and to the want of all true penitence and reformation. Although I translated my Italian name into German, he immediately discovered what I wished to conceal from him; and my obtaining work with him is due only to the intercession of his daughter Catharine, who shows me much undeserved good-will and favor. Now Master Homberger has still another daughter, Margaret by name, a poor blind girl, who is kept in her unhappy home like a despised servant-girl by her father and sister, and this very thing reveals to me the disturbed conscience and unconverted heart of Master Homberger; and I now begin to perceive the difficulty and magnitude of my undertaking, in my desire to aid others without as yet being sure of my own salvation; and this is my heartfelt request of you, doctor, that you will help me to save the soul of this uncouth man, for the sake of my blessed mother."

"A poor, humble individual, like myself, is as little able to do this as you are," replied LUTHER. "That is Christ's own proper work, through His Holy Spirit. Your mother rightly said: 'Tell me much *about Christ.*' The very name of the Lord Jesus has a wondrous power, which infidels may indeed revile and blaspheme, and believers may not comprehend, but no one can from his heart deny it. It is a mystery truly, that he who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved; but it is even so, and the name of Jesus is above all other names, and is like the sound of a trumpet which awakens the soul and spirit of man,

either unto condemnation or unto life. Whoever calls upon the name of Jesus Christ, is not yet spiritually dead, and will either fall or rise with this name. I myself, as to my reason and understanding, have and know nothing of Jesus Christ, since I have neither seen nor heard him in the body; I have known only *his name*. Still, God be praised, I have learned so much of him from Scripture, that I am very well satisfied, and therefore I have no desire to see or hear him bodily, in this sinful life."

"What a wonderful mystery you are opening to me, doctor," said the young man. "I feel as though you had placed me on a high mountain and let me view the glory of God, or as if you were leading me through a glorious meadow and were saying: 'Behold, here alone it is good to be.'"

"Well, then, build your tabernacle on it," added LUTHER, smilingly. "Yes," he continued, "I have often, in my greatest weakness, when terrified and feeling the burden of my sins, under the dread of death, beneath the persecution of a false and wicked world, experienced the divine power which the name of the Lord Jesus exerted over me, when I felt that I was forsaken by all human beings. This snatched me from the jaws of death, brought me again to life, and comforted me in the deepest despair. And so will I, if the Lord wills, abide by this holy name. In it will I live and die."

"You speak," said Fichtner, sadly, "like one who is in the midst of the kingdom of God. How shall *I* receive comfort, who am still so weak in faith? Have I, too, any part in Christ and his kingdom? Has my

blessed mother any part in the Lord and his salvation?"

"Certainly, my young friend," was LUTHER'S comforting assurance. "The weak in faith also belong to the kingdom of Christ, else the Lord would not have said to Peter: '*Strengthen thy brethren.*' Besides, St. Paul distinctly enjoins: 'Him that is weak in the faith receive ye.' And elsewhere: 'Comfort the feeble-minded; support the weak.' If the weak in the faith did not belong to Christ, what would have become of the apostles, whom the Lord even after his resurrection rebuked for their want of faith."

"These," said Fichtner, "are truly comforting words to me, both for my own and my dear mother's sake. But to return once more to Homberger, will you occasionally permit me, Doctor, when I feel my weakness, to come to you for counsel?"

"Come as often as you wish," rejoined LUTHER. "And should the image-carver himself express a desire to see me, only let me know, and I shall wait upon him."

With this promise he gave the young man his hand at parting, adding: "Go then, dear friend, and return whenever you wish. But call on me some evening; you will probably meet some dear excellent people, and mighty men of the Lord."

Full of admiration, Fichtner left the great man, who, in every word which passed his lips, revealed such views of the world and of heaven as are possible only in a mind illuminated by Christ himself.

As Fichtner passed by the palace church, and was proceeding toward Coswig street, he saw approaching

him a young woman led by a man. The man he soon recognized to be Veit Dietrich, and he was startled when he came nearer to see the blind girl, Margaret, standing before him.

"You here, dear lady!" he ejaculated.

"You are right," she answered in a broken voice, the tears streaming from her eyes, "*I am the rejected daughter of the family!*"

"For Heaven's sake! what has happened?" asked Fichtner. "Will the unhappy father fill the measure of his sin to the brim? Lord, help me! It is surely time for the judgment to begin."

But Margaret placed her hand over her eyes and said: "Mr. Fichtner, I entreat you, for God's sake, to remember your promise, the solemn promise you made me. I yield to my destiny, and am in God's hands. God sent this dear friend, Mr. Dietrich, to meet me as I left my father's home. I knew then that I was to seek refuge in the good Doctor's house. He will tell me what to do."

"Go thither, in God's name!" said Fichtner. "But what I *must* do, Margaret, that *shall* I do."

And before she could reply, the young man had hastened away, in the direction of Homberger's house.

CHAPTER VI.

MARGARET DRIVEN FROM HOME.

"I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree: yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."—Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36.

IN order to a better understanding of the incident just mentioned, we must take a short step backward.

Catharine Homberger was alone in the room with her sister Margaret, and although the morning hours had passed, she was dressed untidily, and with hair by no means smooth; whereas she was wont long before that hour to appear in all her finery and extravagance. Her whole manner gave evidence of a disturbed mind; dark, gloomy glances cast a dark shadow over her eyes, otherwise so beautiful, and all she did betrayed an irritable, ill-natured frame of mind. She spoke not a word, and acted as if her sister was not present. Margaret, on the other hand, sat as usual in her dark corner at the distaff, and drew the finest threads out of the carefully-prepared flax, as we would expect only a hand aided by the eye could possibly be able to do. Although her countenance indicated the mildness and meekness of her heart, yet it at times assumed an expression of fear and anxiety. She now and then directed her sightless eyes toward her sister, as though she expected some kind words of sympathy. But when Catharine paid no attention whatever

to her, and hurried about the room in a loud, noisy manner, Margaret could endure it no longer.

"Dear sister," she began in a tone of tenderness, "have you no kind word for me to-day? Mayn't I plait your hair?

"Deceitful creature!" cried Catharine, contemptuously, turning her back.

"May God forgive you that word," returned Margaret, calmly.

"You had better see that your own sins are forgiven you," continued her sister, disdainfully. "It suits you exactly that the Lutheran heretics have abolished confession, for now you need not do penance any more."

"Sister!" exclaimed Margaret, in a choked voice, "you should not speak thus to me. I know that I am not to be compared with you in any particular, but this one thing I can truly say, that you are not more sincerely sorry for sin than I. Have I offended you? If so, tell me in what; for as truly as God lives, I am unaware of having done so. Tell me wherein I have injured you, and I will beg your pardon at your very feet."

"And then," added Catharine, quickly and in a sarcastic tone, "you would most likely invite the new journeyman to come in, that he might see your humility, and praise you for it. Silence, you false creature! Were I not sure that you are blind, I should feel like saying that you are only pretending. But that the saints have punished you is something you do not mind."

"The saints cannot punish me," returned Margaret, quietly; "and if you call my blind eyes a punishment, I willingly bear my part of the guilt; but it is not sisterly to scoff at my misfortune."

"Misfortune?" repeated Catharine, and gave free vent to her anger and bitterness. "Only see, Margaret—up to this time you have answered all who pitied you because of your blindness, that you were not unhappy; and you have acted as if it were a special honor and an advantage to be blind, and have often spoken to me and your father about it with such raptures as though it were more desirable to be blind, than to have good eyes. Yes, it was almost enough to make the rest of us envy you. And now all at once it is a misfortune. Yes, I know whom you would like to see, and it is certainly a misfortune that this same person can take no fancy to a poor blind creature like you."

"May God have mercy on you and me!" said the blind girl, while the tears quietly rolled down her pale cheeks, flushed by a momentary glow. "But it is cruel, it is un-Christian to judge and condemn without a hearing. Have I injured you? Why do you not tell me? Can you delight in knowing your poor sister to be guilty of a wrong which she cannot even regret, not knowing what it is?"

"You poor innocent!" retorted her sister jeeringly; and then, overpowered by the angry feelings that moved her inmost soul, she continued her reproaches: "Shall I, forsooth, calmly listen and look on, while he scorns and abuses me, and extols you as a saint? Shall I, indeed, join him in falling down before you as before the Queen of Heaven?"

"Catharine!" cried Margaret, shocked by her sister's language. "These are awful words which you have spoken. *Who* scorns and abuses you and exalts me?"

"You artful thing!" said Catharine, angrily approaching her sister. "You ask these questions of me whilst your whole face is aglow with the blush of guilt; even your blind eyes betray you to be a liar."

Margaret covered her eyes with her hand; then falling on her knees, she wept aloud, and said: "Sister, if your heart is not closed against mercy, have pity on me! Impose the severest penance, I will freely and gladly perform it. I know that you look upon me as a poor, humble servant. I dare not hope for anything, where you have everything. I am unworthy of your love: punish me as severely as you will, I shall not resist; but do not speak thus to me."

Catharine for a moment seemed to be touched with sympathy for her humble sister. Irresolute as to what she should do or say, she was surprised by the sudden entrance of her father, the dark, wild look of whose eyes certainly did not encourage composure in Catharine's mind.

"What is this?" exclaimed Homberger, violently. "Why are you on your knees, Margaret?"

"I am doing penance, father," answered the daughter, submissively.

"Get up!" said her father, in a peremptory tone. "This cannot go on any longer. You must leave the house. Must I be racked and tormented on your account?"

Margaret, constrained by the terrible words of her father to retain her kneeling posture, extended her hands towards him, and said: "Father, *dear* father, if you thrust me from the house, whither shall I, a poor blind girl, go? Shall I not perish on the street?"

"Get up, I tell you!" repeated Homberger angrily, and added, somewhat more calmly, when Margaret had obeyed the command; "This too is part of the curse that rests upon you, that you cannot be received into a convent; you must go to your aunt in Magdeburg."

Margaret listened in silence to the sentence that banished her from her father's house; her tears were instantly dried, and the snow-white pallor again lay upon her face.

"The stranger youth must leave the house also," continued Homberger, "and this very day. He is the evil spirit of my life."

Although Catharine had listened calmly and with evident approval to the judgment upon her sister, ter, yet this last declaration of her father agitated her greatly.

"The strange journeyman also?" she asked. "Why do you wish this, dear father?"

"Child," he answered, "you know not what you ask. Twenty long years and more have I kept it locked up within my breast, but it will no more give me any rest. Do you not know that the stranger, who would force himself upon me, is a liar and an imposter? He calls himself Leonard Fichtner, but do you not know that his name is *Leonardo Pinetta*, and that he is an Italian, a native of Milan?"

"No!" exclaimed Catharine, astonished, "how should I know this? Has he himself told it to you, dear father?"

"Not in words, but with his eyes!" replied Homberger. "Only look at him, how deceit and malice

are reflected from his face. He has come to ruin me. Only look at him and listen to his talk; his looks are vulture's claws, and his words are poniard stabs. Has he not the face of his foolish, deceitful mother, and the full name of his accursed father?"

"Holy Mary!" cried Catharine in terror, "what are you saying, dear father? You are more excited than I have ever known you. May you not have deceived yourself? The stranger seems to be a polite, agreeable person, notwithstanding he permitted himself to be moved with a false compassion for our blind Margaret, and spoke inconsiderately. Surely, dear father, you must be mistaken."

Homberger smiled contemptuously, and said: "You foolish child, think you I could mistake for an innocent dove the serpent that crawls toward me from out a thicket with intent to kill me? My memory is often weak, but the image that deceit and malice imprinted on my soul twenty-five years ago does not grow pale, and I see it all the more distinctly the older I grow. But," he added, excitedly, "you shall see for yourself, Catharine."

And with this he hastened to a locked closet, the key of which he carried himself, opened it with a trembling hand, and took from the furthest corner a casket covered with dust and mould from the dampness of the wall. He opened it with much difficulty, seized quickly, as though committing a theft, a portrait, and as his look fell upon it, he trembled like a leaf. With all his force he dashed the likeness upon the floor, and cried, "Away, accursed face! the dead arise and testify!"

The unhappy man threw himself, exhausted, into a chair, and covered his eyes with both his hands. Upon Margaret's face there lay an earnest tranquillity, like the hushed decrees of a judgment of God. It was as if all at once the solution of a mysterious problem had dawned upon her—a light that spread itself over her own heart and life, over all her destiny, like a revelation from God, and permitted her to recognize the hand of Him who weighs the deeds of man upon just scales, and brings to light that which was hidden in darkness. Her soul trusted, and her sightless eyes turned to her father in silent expectation of her own further destiny.

Catharine, on the other hand, although greatly affected by her father's delirious words and actions, felt her terror overcome by her curiosity. She hastily picked up the likeness, the metal case of which was badly broken by the heavy fall upon the floor, examined it eagerly, and then exclaimed, "Holy Virgin, this is indeed the young Italian!"

"Do you see it now?" asked the father, laughing wildly. "The dead arise and testify. But their testimony is not true; they perjure themselves, and betray the innocent!"

"For the sake of all the saints, father," said Catharine, "tell me, I beg of you, what does all this mean? Whose likeness is this?"

Homberger sank into a deep silence, and stared fixedly before him. Catharine dared not repeat her question, for all she knew so well that she ruled her father's heart, and often was able to mollify his fierce anger with a single word or a kiss. She examined with in-

quisitive looks the features of the likeness, while her bosom rose and sank again as though deeply excited. But Margaret remained immovable as a marble statue, and gazed, with her sightless eyes, like an angel of judgment, silently and obediently into the revelation of the Lord.

At last Homberger broke the oppressive silence. The wild expression vanished, and the old gloomy insolence of proud self-righteousness and moral blindness again settled upon his features.

"You are right, Catharine," said he "I must tell you at last that of which I have hitherto kept you in ignorance. It may be that you will have to testify for me, in order to prove your father's innocence. Listen, then, to me! That I worked for two years in Italy you already know, but you do not know what happened to me while there. It came to pass that the daughter of a prominent and wealthy citizen, Maria by name, won my heart by her beauty and her modest demeanor, which are shown in this likeness. For this is she, the false, deceitful woman! I knew at the same time that a young man, the son of wealthy and distinguished parents—his accursed name was *Leonardo Pinetta*—was devoted in his attentions to her, and it was rumored that they were betrothed. But this was a lie. Maria's heart belonged to me—I knew it from her glances, and from the tone of her voice. *Pinetta* observed this too, and felt that the poor stranger was in his way; and one evening as I turned innocently and unarmed the corner of the Piazza Fontana toward the Ospedale Maggiore, *Pinetta* rushed upon me from a dark corner, seized me by the throat and thrust a

stiletto at my breast. I was obliged to defend myself. I wrenched the deadly weapon from the assassin's hand and aimed it at his own heart, and I have reason to believe he fell a victim to his own murderous intention, for he fell to the ground, uttering a loud cry."

"Holy Mary!" cried Catharine, terrified. "And was poor *Pinetta* really dead?"

"Poor *Pinetta!*" exclaimed Homberger, with renewed anger. "What do you mean by *poor* Pinetta, Catharine? Have you sympathy for an assassin? Or do you think I should have bared my bosom and quietly awaited the blow? Have I not an equal right with any other to life and happiness?"

Certainly, dear father!" replied Catharine, eagerly. "I only wished to know whether *Pinetta* was really dead."

"I do not know!" continued the father angrily. "I let the assassin lie where he fell; and that self-same night I left the city and returned to Germany. But I believe and trust that the traitor had found his merited reward. For when I was in the Tyrol, where I was compelled to remain some weeks, sick with a fever, I heard that a short time before a citizen of Milan had been assassinated by a German, and that officers were then on the track of the murderer. The fools! They knew not that the curse had fallen on the head of the guilty party."

"And this young stranger, Leonard Fichtner?" asked Catharine, "who can he be?"

"Do not mention his accursed name!" cried Homberger. "His name and his face are apparitions of the devil. He is the curse of my life—the curse that has

rested upon my head ever since that awful day, and now assumes human shape. I believe the dead arise, because they can find no rest in the grave."

"My poor father!" said Catharine, with feeling, "you torture yourself with imaginary guilt. Have you not often told me, that when I was born to you, you recognized in *me* your reconciliation with Heaven? And even if you have committed a grievous sin, have you not atoned for it fully, most fully, to holy mother Church?"

"That is true, child!" said the father, in the tone of a satisfied conscience; "I have done more, and atoned more, than the Church has enjoined; but the evil one has also his power and claims. I have borne the curse of the dying assassin for years, until it reached its culmination in the birth of our blind Margaret. When the saints laid *you* in my arms, and I beheld your beautiful form, your bright eyes, I knew then that my sin was atoned for. Do you see now, Catharine, why I so dearly love you? You are the visible sign of the reconciled God of heaven."

"My dear father!" cried Catharine, as she fell upon his neck and kissed him.

But Margaret stood in the corner, still as the lifeless marble.

"And now I implore you, dear father," continued Catharine, encouragingly, "do not again forget that the saints have given me to you for your comfort and peace. Whatever of evil happens now can never affect you; and—be not angry with me I pray you—even this very remarkable resemblance of the strange youth, who accidentally bears a name that reminds you of the

enemy of your life and happiness, even this very resemblance of his features to this portrait, appears to me to be a fresh gift of the saints, which their intercessions have procured for you from God. You say that the Milanese maiden was in her heart favorable to you: how if she has sent into your house a remembrance of herself in the living form of the young stranger? If you refused to receive him, would it not be as though you declined to accept the heavenly gift of the dear saints? Your eyes will soon delight in the beautiful features of the youth, and your heart will soon rejoice in sweet recollection of the past."

"Your words please me, my child!" said Homberger. "But," he continued with a clouded brow, "I repeat it, the evil one has also his power and claims. My heart trembles at the sight of this young man, his mere name drives the blood to my brain. It will be hard for me to accustom myself to his presence."

"Only try it, dear father!" said Catharine persuasively. "I will do all in my power to drive the evil spirit from you. You have never yet refused any request of mine; do not refuse me now. Let the stranger stay with us. Especially if you send Margaret to her aunt in Magdeburg, every thing will turn out well!"

"Yes, Margaret must go!" said the father, brutally. "Upon her head and in her blind eyes rests the curse of the deceiver and murderer. This very day must she leave the house."

Only now did both seem to remember that the despised Margaret was present. Both looked at the same instant silently, and as if in expectation, towards the corner where stood the maid already exiled in heart.

Margaret awakened as from a sleep of death; a burning spot lay upon her otherwise corpse-pale cheeks, and about her sightless eyes there played a glimmering spark of life. She lifted her right hand to heaven, pointing with her finger as though threatening, and spoke slowly and solemnly. "It is written, *I, the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.*" Then she let her hand sink, the glow around her sightless eyes vanished, and the accustomed pallor again overspread her face,

These words of the blind girl struck the heart and conscience of the father like a thunderbolt. He sprang furiously upon his helpless daughter and seized her by the throat.

But she stood without flinching, and moved not even a finger of her hand.

At this moment, Catharine notwithstanding her selfishness, shocked and alarmed, hastened to her sister, tore her father's clenched hands from her sister's neck, and exclaimed, "Father, in the name of all the saints, spare her! It is enough surely that you banish her from the house."

"Curses upon you!" cried Homberger, in the wicked wrath of an accusing conscience. "Curses upon you, thou child of the devil and of hell!"

And the miserable father lifted his evil hand, and struck the victim of his sins upon her head and breast.

But the abused daughter stood still, and opened not her mouth; but bore the blows like a lamb led to the slaughter, her eyes dry as an arid fountain.

And now her brutal father seized her by the arm,

and hissed into her ear, "Curse you, and may instant death come upon you if ever again your foot cross this threshold!"

Thus speaking, he thrust his own daughter from his door!

CHAPTER VII.

HOMBERGER'S RASH ACT.

"And hear your prayers, and be at one with you, and never forsake you in time of trouble." 2 Maccab. i. 5.

WHEN Leonard Fichtner hastened away from Veit Dietrich and Margaret, he felt his heart burn with indignant anger at Homberger's shameful conduct, caused in part by natural sympathy for the poor girl in her trouble, and partly, as it now suddenly became clear to his mind, from a deeper, a greatly deeper feeling, from heartfelt love, by which he felt himself almost mysteriously drawn toward the unfortunate girl.

On his way to the wood-carver's house, good and evil thoughts crossed each other tumultously in his mind; but whenever he thought of a prompt and rigorous championship of the ill-used Margaret, he seemed to hear her request, *Remember your promise!* and his revengeful feelings then turned into sorrowful compassion for the unhappy, self-deluded man. But what should, what could he do? Yea, what *dared* he do?

"Ah," he said at last, to himself, "I know of no one upon earth who can help and advise here, save MARTIN LUTHER, whose words are thunderbolts that shatter and burst the rocks of the petrified conscience; no one but this all-powerful man, at whose feet I could fall down in admiration of his evident ambassadorship from God, at once the *lamb* and the *lion*, who lifts up and

strikes down, wounds and heals with the WORD which the Spirit of God puts upon his lips. It *must* be the Spirit of God that speaks through him. I feel it in the happy trembling of my heart, in the indescribable joy that agitates my soul like the resplendence of divine glory, whenever he testifies of Jesus Christ."

"Yes," continued the youth in his soliloquy, "now I too understand how you, my good, sainted mother, ever longed more and more after the Lord when we poor people talked with you. We thought we were giving you to drink in your soul's need, and yet we ourselves had yet no open fountain within us. Now thou *seest*, while we as yet only *believe;* but, blessed be God, are still happy in hope *and* in faith."

Meanwhile he had arrived at Homberger's dwelling. Struggling with the newly-awakened feeling of revenge and with the Christian spirit of forgiveness and mercy, he entered the house.

Catharine was alone. She had been weeping, and now sat in Margaret's accustomed place in the corner, and she was letting her rosary drop mechanically through her fingers. When she saw the young man enter, she hastily sprang up, covered her eyes, and prepared to leave the room.

"Stop, Miss Catharine!" cried Fichtner, entreatingly. "I wish to ask you a question—where is your sister?"

Catharine, with a look of disappointed expectation and reproachful accusation, hastened to the door.

"Catharine!" cried Fichtner, endeavoring to prevent her departure, "you may think of me as you please, but I will not let you leave the room until you answer my question. Where is your sister Margaret?"

"How dare you presume to address me in this manner?" asked Catharine, indignantly. "You have not yet been even received into this house as an inmate, and yet you would exercise authority in it!"

"Would to God," replied the youth, "that greater authority had never been exercised in this house than just now. I ask you for the third time, Where is your sister Margaret? You will not answer?" he continued, as Catharine looked at him angrily, "Catharine, no power can send me away. I will follow you every step you take. I will call to you through the walls of your chamber, until you tell me where your sister has gone?"

This earnest, solemn speech made her tremble. She cast down her eyes and answered, half-unwillingly, "I do not know."

"You do not know!" repeated Fichtner, continuing bitterly, "that means, you do not know where your sin and your father's crime have driven her; but Catharine, you know well *why* Margaret is not here!"

"I had no part in it," hurriedly replied Catharine, in a self-satisfied tone of voice.

"*You* no part in it?" asked Fichter. "So, then, when you let the rosary glide through your delicate fingers, and repeat your Paternoster and Ave Marias, you think you have expiated *your* part in it. Poor girl! if it were only your tears that you had woven into your rosary, there might be some Christianity in it, provided that with every tear you would say, '*I am a poor sinner!*' and then go and fall upon your sister's neck, or, still better, at her feet, and say, 'I have sinned against you, and am not worthy of your love.'"

"You abuse my patience and forbearance!" cried Catharine vehemently.

"By no means, young lady!" replied Fichtner, calmly. "I wished merely to make clear the portion of guilt that you have incurred on your sister's account, and which you are unwilling to confess. Miss Catharine, your sister is blind; but do you not know that *God's eye sees for her!* Who has made you mistress over your sister? Who has helped build the wall between the blind daughter and her deluded father? Your sister has reposed on the same mother's breast with you, and what prerogative have you over her?"

"The curse of our house rests upon Margaret!" replied Catharine, insolently.

"Yes," added Fichtner, sadly, "just as the curse of the sinful man rests upon the lamb he offers in sacrifice. Miss Catharine, can you really feel yourself relieved when you have laid your sin upon your poor sister?"

"*My* sin?" asked Catharine, with a proud look. "Do you know any wrong *I* have done? What evil can you charge against *me?* Would to God *your* conscience were as clear as *mine!*"

"Poor, deluded girl!" continued Fichtner, "you bear on your conscience only the sin the Church and her false priests teach you; you have been taught no better, although you live here at the very fountain-head of evangelical truth, and need only draw thence the living water; but you will not. Shall I tell you what it is that should oppress your conscience? You abuse your father's weak heart, and the unrest of his dis-

turbed conscience, to further your own selfish purposes, and injure your sister Margaret. You think you love your father, but you deceive *yourself* and *him;* you only flatter him that he may in his simplicity and weakness indulge your idle vanity. You think that you are kind and affectionate to your sister; but your kindness is a conceited condescension, and your friendliness is a mockery of sisterly love and affection. You think you are doing your duty, but you do not really know what your duty before God is. You think you have no sin, but your heart lies bound with a hundred chains of sin. You think you have peace with God when you have counted your rosary and gone to confession, and have completed the imposed penance-task with affected tears and sighs. But alas! you know nothing at all of peace with God, for you do not yet know how *deeply* you have fallen. You are contented when you are reconciled with the Church! Poor, deluded girl! Have you the power to destroy the record of your guilt before God, in which the Recording Angel has written all the tears your sister has shed because of your pride, your arrogance, and your cruelty? One such tear puts all your false peace to shame!"

"Not a word more!" cried Catharine, with angry impatience. "You talk of my *sin!* Do you know what my sin really is! It is in listening to you, a heretic from Holy Mother Church; in having been weak and foolish enough, moved by mistaken pity, to intercede with my father for you—in having wished to make a refuge for you, a stranger and a heretic, in my father's house. Now I too see what my father's first sight of you revealed to him. Falsehood is your weapon, and

fraud your daily exercise. You lie with your name, and you lie with your face!"

"Catharine!" said the young man, sorrowfully, "you have fallen deeper than I had thought. The Lord have mercy upon your soul!"

"Spare your pity for yourself, good sir!" she answered scornfully, her eyes sparkling with anticipated triumph. And with these words she hastened to the cupboard, tore it open, seized the little portrait, held it up before his face, and asked exultingly: "Do you know this picture?"

But scarcely had Fichtner's look rested upon the likeness when he snatched it from her with both his hands, covered it with kisses, and bursting into tears, cried aloud: "My mother, my dear, my sainted mother!"

"It is true, then," cried Catharine, terrified. "The unhappy woman who has brought the curse upon our house is your mother?"

"Slander not that redeemed soul!" said Fichter, with commanding earnestness. "If the image of your own mother is not entirely obliterated from your breast, humble yourself before the words, '*a mother's love*.' Catharine," he continued, more gently, as he saw that she was touched by his words, "Catharine, I cannot lift from before your eyes the veil of a terrible secret, but this know: in this picture the eye of God sees the hand of the thief and murderer."

"For the sake of all the saints," implored Catharine, anxiously and in terror, "give me back the picture! Have pity upon me! If my father should enter, and perceive what I have done, his anger would be terrible.

Give me back the picture, and I will forgive you all the harm you have done me."

But Fichtner did not seem to hear a word she uttered. His gaze was fixed upon the lovely features of the portrait; he kissed the picture repeatedly, and wept without restraint. "Mother," he said to himself, "I thank thee for thy love, for thy care. The Lord is my witness that I have never knowingly grieved thee! I have loved thee with all my heart; but the better I learn to know the Lord of whom we should have told thee in thy dying hour, and yet did not know him ourselves—the more I know on whom I believe—the better I know that I was not worthy of thy love. Pray the Lord for me! God cannot reject a mother's prayer! Can not one sinful creature pray for another?"

He sank exhausted into a chair, and pressed the picture now to his lips, and then to his breast.

Catharine could not steel her heart to such an exhibition of filial love. She looked with sympathy at the young man, who did not seem to suspect for a moment what she suffered and how she struggled because of him. But now a heavy step was heard overhead. She shuddered, hastened to Fichtner, and said, "Again I ask you, for the sake of all the saints, give me back the picture! It will be my death if my father should see it in your hands!"

But Fichtner returned no answer: he was entirely absorbed in contemplation of the portrait.

"Sir," continued Catharine with anxious importunity. "You have deeply persecuted me; you have pierced my heart with words sharp as with dagger-

thrusts, more cruelly than any one else, even my father, has ever done; but all shall be forgiven—only give me back the picture."

"Have I wounded you!" the young man now asked, and a beam of joy played upon his countenance. "Ah, Catharine, tell me once again that I have wounded you; this would be truly a flower in the desert. Catharine, is it true that my words have given you pain?"

"Terrible, incomprehensible man!" answered Catharine with a shudder. "You revel in my suffering! You rejoice when I despair! There is something gloomy and peculiar in you, that fills me with dread!"

"Gloomy!" repeated Fichtner, impressively. "Say rather, *mysterious!* Catharine, it is *faith in the Lord*, as the only Mediator and Redeemer, that constitutes the mystery between us. You do not yet know the sorrow from which springs eternal joy. You feel the pain of the wound, but you do not yet long for the only balsam that can heal. You seek aid from man, when God alone can save. You have fear, you say. Know then, fear is the path towards love."

At these words Catharine blushed, and her eyes fell, a sad proof indeed that she did not yet understand Fichtner's words. He was about to explain himself, when a dull sound was heard in the room above them, as if a heavy weight had fallen on the floor.

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Catharine, thoroughly alarmed, "what's that? It comes from my father's chamber!" and she ran excitedly out of the room.

"Why is it thus?" said the young man to himself, sadly. "I have experienced in my own heart that we cannot learn to love God before we fear him, cannot

flee to His mercy and grace before His holy justice has filled us with fear and terror. How can Catharine love God and comprehend his grace in Christ, since she does not yet fear God's judgment? And this is the great sin of the Church, that she teaches the wrath of God to be a human passion and weakness, and inculcates a penance and reconciliation such as may indeed, among sinful men, unite divided hearts, because each one, for the sake of his own peace, dare not demand too strict an account with his neighbor—an account which can never stand before the holy and the just God, who needs no human forbearance for himself; and is it not pride alone that plants this blindness and hypocrisy in our hearts? So, unless a man humbles himself under God's powerful hand, he can neither know himself nor his Lord."

This soliloquy was interrupted by Catharine's speedy return. Trembling, excited, and breathing rapidly, she exclaimed excitedly, "May the saints protect us! Father has locked his room-door; he will not answer me, and I cannot hear him move. Mr. Fichtner, for the sake of the Holy Virgin, I beseech you do not leave me alone now. I know not what to do! This frightful suspense will kill me!"

"Is it your father's custom to lock his door?" asked Fichtner.

"He does it only occasionally," answered Catharine, "when he is especially melancholy or despondent. But, heretofore, when I have knocked, he has always opened it. God help me, I know not what to do. I feel as if I myself had done something wrong."

"Will you permit me to go up to his chamber with

you?" asked the young man. "Perhaps he will answer *me*."

"I would like it of all things," she replied, hesitatingly, "but do not think ill of me, Mr. Fichtner, when I tell you my poor father feels a strange antipathy toward you. I fear the sound of your voice will excite his anger! God help me; what shall I do?"

"On your own account—for no other reason—I know of nothing better to be done!" said Fichtner, starting to leave the room. "May not something have happened that demands our immediate aid?"

Catharine could not oppose him, and so she hastened after him up the narrow stairway. He placed his ear to the door which she pointed out to him, but there was a deathlike stillness within.

"Are you quite sure your father is in the room?"

"He cannot be anywhere else!" she answered; "besides, I distinctly heard his footsteps overhead. Father!" she cried, loudly and anxiously, "father, for the sake of all the saints, answer me. It is I, your own Catharine. Father, for the Holy Virgin's sake, open the door!"

But the deathlike silence remained unbroken; then in desperation she jerked at the latch, and wept, and called aloud, so that her cries resounded through the whole house. But the awful silence continued.

"Do *you* speak!" she begged the young man, in her anguish "Even though he should be angry with me, I cannot endure any longer this terrible anxiety."

"Master Homberger," now called Fichtner, as he knocked softly upon the door. "Open! Do not compel us to use force! We come to help you!"

Still no sound from within. The noise of the repeated knocking was echoed dull and heavy, as from a death-chamber.

"Holy Mary!" exclaimed Catharine, "Father is dead! I will die with him;" and, as if to make her words true, she became deathly pale, and fell to the floor insensible.

"My God!" exclaimed Fichtner, while a strange trembling ran through his limbs, and his eyes became moist. Within the chamber lay a dead or a dying man, and without, by his side, a dying daughter, and he alone with both, without advice, without assistance! This double catastrophe oppressed his heart like a cruel hand laid heavily upon his breast. Prayer was his only recourse. He fell upon his knees beside Catharine, and cried in fervent supplication, "Lord God, thou art mighty in thy judgments! When thou sittest upon thy throne in judgment, the sinner sinks into the dust. But, Lord, we hope in thee; thou wilt not destroy, but save! Thou hast permitted my sainted mother to go home to thee with this consolation! I hold thee to thy word and thy promise, and pray thee: I, a poor man, pray thee! help Lord, save, and enter not into judgment with the sinner! Christ, thou only Mediator and Redeemer, thou whose everlasting glory blinds my eyes—when I look to thee, Christ, thou Son of God, have mercy upon me!"

An almost casual look at Catharine's helpless condition restored him to a calmer state of mind. He hastened down stairs and looked for water. At last, in the yard against the workshop, he found a large barrel full of rain-water. He threw his handkerchief into it,

soaked it full of water, hastened with quick strides up the stairs, and bathed the face and hands of the inanimate girl, and soon had the pleasure of seeing her revive. As she was yet too weak to walk, he seated her upon a chair that stood near by, and said, "Miss Catharine, I beg you take courage. Pray the Lord for strength and for resignation to his holy will. We do not yet know what has happened to your father; but, I assure you, I believe that your father still lives. He dare not die yet! Catharine, do you give your consent for me to do what I deem best?"

"Yes," she said, sobbing, "but do my father no harm."

"Enough," continued the youth; "he will suffer no bodily harm."

Then he returned to the chamber door, and repeated his entreaties. "Master Homberger, answer: open the door! For the sake of your soul's peace, answer me!"

But the silence continued.

"I know that he is dead," said Catharine, wringing her hands in despair.

"He is *not* dead!" replied Fichtner, earnestly. "He dare not die; my faith will never thus be brought to shame. Now, then," he continued, "let us try the last resort."

And bending down to where there was a crack in the door, he called through it, "Master Homberger, think of *Maria Barchi* and *Leonardo Pinetta!* The dead have arisen, and live again."

Scarcely were these words uttered, when a deep, scarcely audible breathing was heard in the room; un-

intelligible sounds, half sighs, half groans, rising up from the floor.

"Merciful God!" cried Catharine, springing from her chair, and throwing herself upon her knees at the closed door, weeping aloud. "Father, good, dear father, for the sake of the Holy Virgin, answer me and open the door. Something has happened to you, and I have come to help you. It is I, your Catharine, your dear child!"

But all her cries and tears availed nothing. It was as still within the room as before.

"I believe," said Fichtner, earnestly, "that the name of *another* child would have more effect upon him now than yours. Call out the name of *Margaret*, and he will answer."

"I cannot!" answered Catharine, breathing heavily. "I cannot!" she added quickly, looking at Fichtner sorrowfully, almost as if imploring mercy, "Sir, upon this name rests the curse of my father, of this house!"

"Unhappy, self-deluded girl!" exclaimed the youth. "How difficult it is to save a soul from the bonds of error and superstition! Yet," he continued after a pause, "yet it concerns not you, but your poor, unhappy father! Catharine, I know no other way than to burst open the door. Will you permit it?"

"Do whatever you think necessary, but spare my poor father," she answered.

And now, a third time having demanded entrance, in vain, the young man braced himself with all his strength against the door. It began to crack and split; the wooden bolt burst in pieces, and the door flew open so suddenly that Fichtner fell to the floor. He speedily

picked himself up, but not so promptly as to prevent Catharine from rushing in and throwing herself shrieking upon her father, who lay prostrate with his face upon the floor.

Fichtner's quick eye at once took in all that had happened. Immediately over the unhappy man dangled from a beam in the ceiling a broken rope.

"*Judas Iscariot*," he cried in a trembling voice to the master-carver, "did you know of no other remedy in your trouble? But the Lord is gracious and merciful. Now am I sure that the prayer of my mother has been heard; you will *not* be a lost soul."

"But," he continued, turning to Catharine, "your father cannot remain lying here. I fear he is too weak to help himself. Prepare his bed for him."

Catharine now for the first time perceived that her father's bed was undisturbed, and that the unhappy man had spent the entire night without sleep or rest.

When Fichtner raised up the lifeless form of Homberger and looked into his face, he was startled to see that the deep, furrowed cheeks, and the hollow, lifeless eyes, gave unmistakable tokens of insanity. The old man looked fixedly and stolidly at the youth, and let him do with him what he pleased.

"This does not disappoint my hope," said Fichtner, in an earnest, confident tone. "Poor old man, your unhappy soul will not be lost! The Lord is gracious and merciful, and all that he does is well done."

And he lifted the heavy burden in his arms, and laid the unconscious man upon the bed.

"Who is your physician?" he then asked.

"Doctor Schurff," answered Catharine. "Do you

believe that father will recover, and that a physician can be of any use?"

"I truly hope so, because I believe it is God's will," answered the youth. And as Catharine threw herself upon her knees at the bedside of her father and folded her hands and prayed, Fichtner said: "Your prayer, Catharine, is very proper, but pray not only for your father's body and life, but also for his soul. And," he gently added, "pray also for *yourself*." And with this he left the room to hasten for the physician.

CHAPTER VIII.

LUTHER AND HIS FRIENDS.

"In the way of righteousness is life; and in the path thereof there is no death." Prov. xii. 28.

A FEW days after, in the evening, Dr. Augustine Schurff, at that time a celebrated physician in Wittenberg, entered the Augustinian cloister, and was met in the entrance hall by Madam Catharine Luther.

"Doctor," she said to him, "I knew that you would come this evening, and have been impatient to see you. I cannot deny that I am greatly concerned about my dear husband. Ever since yesterday he has been unusually dejected, and more distressed in mind than I have ever known him. He does not think that he is sick in body, and insists upon it that his malady is mental. God alone knows what has befallen him. I feared that he would say nothing to you about his condition, and therefore I wished to ask you to speak to him yourself."

"Very willingly, dear madam!" replied the good physician. "But do not be alarmed, you need fear no danger. The doctor *cannot* yet be spared to us and our holy cause; what the wonderful God has begun through him, He must also complete through him. This is my firm conviction. Therefore, be comforted!"

Madam Luther listened gladly to these consoling words, yet her countenance showed that her fears were not entirely removed. She followed the physician up

the stairway, and then proceeded to her own room, while Schurff entered the well-known study of MARTIN LUTHER.

Here he found already assembled a goodly number of fast friends of LUTHER, and fellow-workers in the glorious cause. There were present, *Philip Melanchthon*, lean and wan, with deeply furrowed but mild and gentle face; *Johannes Bugenhagen*, usually called Doctor Pommer, pastor of the city church, easily recognized by his long, full beard, that flowed down and covered his breast, *Justus Jonas*, professor and provost of the University of Wittenberg; *Veit Deitrich*, LUTHER'S faithful secretary and intimate companion, and the noble *Baron von Wildenfels*. They sat at a long, wide table; Doctor LUTHER at the head.

Schurff, immediately upon his entrance, cast a penetrating look upon LUTHER, who looked even for him unusually thoughtful, deep shadows being formed about his eyes, but otherwise with no indications of sickness.

"You are heartily welcome, dear Doctor!" said LUTHER. "And what news do you bring us from the wood-carver Homberger?"

"Not the best, worthy Doctor!" replied the physician. "The unhappy man has fallen into a deep melancholy, and he neither speaks nor answers any questions, and lets himself be fed like a little child. There is no one to whom he will listen except the young stranger, although he vouchsafes no answer."

LUTHER looked reflective, and said: "He who has fallen into sin should not on that account despair, but rather reform, repent and quit sinning. Judas, when

he betrayed the Lord, committed a great sin, but not unto death. Afterward, when he repented, but did not *repent* aright, his sin became greater and heavier, and the result was that he despaired.—I hope God will yet restore the old man."

"I would like to have no doubt about this," replied the physician; "but it is quite possible that Master Homberger may die from this terrible shock, notwithstanding he has been so healthy and strong."

"Yes!" said LUTHER, in earnest reflection. "In the midst of life we are in death, and for us mortals there is at the end nothing so sure as death. And although each one laments the troubles of life, yet all men cling to life, and no one will willingly give it up, although one misfortune ever succeeds another, and there is no cessation of troubles till death comes to our relief. Pliny, the heathen, has said, 'The best medicine for a man is to die young!'"

"But do you think, Doctor," asked Schurff, "that one should despise the evidences of death, and should not protect himself from danger?"

"Not by any means!" replied LUTHER. "Julius Cæsar thought it was better to die once than to be always guarding against it; and although such a sentiment may be well enough for a heathen, it does not become a Christian. I think that we should not tempt God, but use the means that he gives, and trust in him. Christians could easily suffer and overcome death, did they not know that it is an evidence of God's displeasure. This makes death terrible. But the heathen die without fear; they neither see nor feel that it is God's anger, but think that death is the end

of nature and is a matter of course. The Epicureans say: 'It lasts but one short hour.' Cicero would be wiser, and says: 'Hereafter, when we are dead, we shall be either *nothing*, or happy!' This certainly means that hereafter nothing ill can happen to us. Ah, how different the death of the Christian and of the heathen!"

A pause here ensued, and LUTHER again became absorbed in thought. Schurff interrupting the silence asked, "Dear Doctor, you seem to be somewhat troubled, as if you yourself were thinking more about your death than your life."

"You are right!" answered LUTHER. "I have just been thinking that I have doubly deserved death. First from God, because I am a sinner, and this I am sorry for. Next from the devil, because I have assailed his kingdom of lies and murders, for which he would gladly repay me with death. For the devil, who is the author of death, is our adversary, and aims at our life. He has sworn our death, and we have deserved it; therefore we may well look for the hour, for come it will."

"And do you think that you are ill?" asked the physician, with kindly sympathy.

"How shall I answer you," asked LUTHER. "It is true I can sleep but little, and I often have a ringing and roaring in my ears, like to a storm; and then my head feels as if the world were spinning around me. Yet I have no special pain, and consider my suffering rather to be a temptation of the evil one. At night when I am lying restless upon my bed, vainly trying, hour after hour, to sleep, I argue much with our Lord God, out of my great impatience, and remind him of his

promise to deliver us from all trouble and temptation. At last I come to the true teacher and ruler, and God teaches me to rightly understand the Holy Scriptures; for if we expect that everything will go as we wish, we surely know little of God's word. Now, God does not mean that we should be *too* impatient. Hence he everywhere requires of us in the Holy Scriptures that we should hope and strive; and Job says also, Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. As though he would say, Although thou hast turned thy face from me, yet will I not believe that thou art mine enemy."

"The righteous are indeed assailed by many temptations!" here remarked Justus Jonas.

"Yes," said LUTHER quickly, "and only add to this, Doctor Jonas, that the dear cross, temptations and persecution, teaches us the golden art of patience and of befitting prayer. Flesh and blood do not bear trials patiently, and would prefer ease and comfort. I am sometimes so cold and languid that I cannot even pray. Then I stop my ears and say: I know that God is not far from me, therefore I must cry to him. Then, too, I set before me the ingratitude of the world and the wicked acts of the world, including the pope of Rome and his vermin, until I grow warm and burn with righteous anger and hatred, and *then* I pray, O Lord, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Thus my prayer becomes fervent!"

"One would think," said Bugenhagen, "that the theology of these fanatics is not only the cause of offence to believers, but also of much other evil and misfortune in the world!"

"Yes," said LUTHER, an ironical smile playing upon

his countenance. "There are no greater knaves than the sun and moon. For if they did not shine there would be no theft, or riot, or robbery. Our Lord is the great source of evil, for why has he created it? says the goddess Reason. The world," he continued, quickly resuming his serious expression, "will have owls, that is, seceders and bigots; the birds fly to them, that is, the world admires them, receives them with great honor, gives them money and goods in abundance."

"Until they eat up one another!" interrupted Jonas. "I am reminded of this by the words of St. Hilary, 'When heretics pull each other by the hair and contend, then has the church peace!'"

"Quite right, brother Jonas!" said LUTHER; "we do not know how well it is for us that we have opponents who work against us. Had not Cerinthus denied the divinity of Christ, St. John would never have written his gospel. But he was compelled to write and say, "*In the beginning was the word.*'

"I maintain," said Veit Dietrich, "there is no more difficult passage in the entire gospel, than these words of John, that Christ is God."

"My dear Veit," said LUTHER, "I have said it often and I repeat it again, whoever would know God aright and speculate concerning him without danger, must look into the manger, and learn first of all to know the Son of the Virgin Mary, born at Bethlehem, lying in his mother's bosom or hanging upon the cross; then will he understand who God is. This will not only then be not terrible, but on the contrary most attractive and comforting. Guard yourself, my dear Veit, from the proud thought of climbing into heaven

without this ladder, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ in his *humanity*. As the WORD simply describes him, stick to this, and do not permit reason to divert you from it; then will you apprehend God aright! I wish to know of no other God than the God who hung upon the cross, Jesus Christ, the son of God, and of the Virgin Mary."

"But it is indeed a most difficult thing for one from his heart to call Christ Lord and God, who redeems us from death."

"Yes, and why is this so, dear Doctor Pommer?" asked LUTHER. "Many speak of the *divinity* of Christ, as do the pope and others like him, but just as a blind man speaks about color. When I hear Christ speak, I believe that I hear the *undivided Godhead speak*. Thus the Father, Son and Holy Ghost speak when he says, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Here the entire Godhead in its undivided essence speaks. Hence, if a God is preached to me who has not died for me, I do not believe him to be God. Whoever believes this article believes the chief article of the Christian faith, however foolish it may seem to the world."

"I believe it firmly," here remarked Baron von Wildenfels. "Have patience with my weakness, doctor, but what you have just said concerning the *entire undivided Godhead of Christ*, I do not exactly comprehend."

"I will make it plain to you by an example!" answered LUTHER. "Christ says, the Comforter whom I will send will not depart from you but will remain with you and will give you strength to suffer every

misfortune and trial. Now, he says, *I will pray the Father!* But before he had said, *I will do it.* Thus, in the first instance, he spake as God; in the latter, as man. Thus I learn that Christ is God *and* man. Thus Christ speaks sometimes as pure man, and again as pure God. Therefore, when he says, I will *pray!* these are the words of a man, and yet at the same time the *Son of God* prays."

"Therefore," said Wildenfels, "in Christ are present always both God and man?"

"Certainly, noble sir!" replied LUTHER. "Permit me to use still another illustration. When I say, The servant has let the child fall, I do not mean its body only, but also its soul. In like manner when I say, The child has eaten, I mean that not only the mouth but the whole being, body and soul, has eaten. And thus we should speak of Christ."

"How gladly I speak of him!" said the baron; "and how dearly I should like to comprehend how God became man."

"The incarnation of Christ," continued LUTHER, "is indeed a great mystery that cannot be explained; nor can it be comprehended by human reason, that God, the highest majesty, has thus been clothed in our flesh. I repeat it, such a mystery is the greatest of all miracles, and the greatest of all of God's favors, and which, too, no human heart can rightly comprehend. The incarnation of Christ will be a study in eternity, and although I contemplate it daily, I am yet dissatisfied with myself that I have not yet nearly exhausted the subject, and that reason and understanding can never comprehend the two natures of Christ. But

this mystery is not given that I should fathom it with my puny reason; but this is the true meaning of it: *Surrender yourself, and believe the words of the gospel through the working of the Holy Spirit, and give God the glory that he is true.* And this I believe to be the true, eternal life, and the life of the angels, that we shall forever long to know more. There we shall ever see something new. In short, my noble sir, if you would work out your salvation safely and without endangering your peace of mind, avoid all attempts to discover by human reason our Lord Jesus Christ, either as to his *being* or his *will. For except in his word, and in his Son Jesus Christ, you will not find God*, but you should learn to apprehend God in the manner in which he is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures!"

"How can we sufficiently thank you, reverend Doctor," said the baron, "for having translated the Holy Scriptures, and especially the New Testament, and for having explained it in your works."

"These thanks you must hand over to Master Philip," said LUTHER, smiling, "for it was he who almost forced me to translate the New Testament. And as for my books, I want you to understand distinctly, *my books are only the scaffolding to the Holy Scriptures*, and they are of no further use than as *introductions to the Holy Scriptures.* I would have the people to be *Scripturists* and not *Lutherists*—that is, I would have people believe the Scriptures and not me. The Holy Scriptures alone are the living fountain—all other books are only little streams flowing from it. With the Bible we can drive away the devil and heresy. For this reason Dr. Carlstadt was afraid of me, when

he said that 'I had studied the prophets and Apostles ten years longer than he, therefore he could not cope with me.'"

"And yet," interrupted Melanchthon, "how much better is this Carlstadt than the world, which esteems the word of God no more highly than the word of a man, and is offended at the Scriptures."

"Do you not then know, my Philip," answered LUTHER, smiling, "that according to *reason* everything in the Scriptures is falsehood? There is no religion under the sun more foolish than the Christian religion, if you judge it by reason. For what reason and wisdom can convince a man *that there is a God?* When human reason fails there, as with Erasmus notwithstanding all his grand learning, then man mocks and scoffs at the idea. But we should *believe* that God will show his might and power in weakness, and reveal his wisdom in the greatest foolishness. Blessed is he who thus believes!"

"Ah, how difficult it is to be a true, believing preacher of the word," said Dietrich.

"And it becomes easy only in one way!" added LUTHER. "The Holy Scriptures demand a submissive heart which honors God's word, loves it sincerely and adheres to it, and prays always, 'Lord, teach me thy ways and thy statutes.' But the Holy Spirit resists the proud, and will not dwell in them. And although some study the Scriptures diligently, and for a time teach and preach Christ correctly, yet as soon as they become proud and conceited, God turns them out of the church. A lawyer," he continued with a laugh, "may be a rogue, but a theologian must be a pious

man. Therefore, God hangs about the neck of all faithful preachers the dear cross, shame, persecution, the world and the devil, to keep them humble, that God alone may have the honor, and they do not become proud. If one should seek honor and wealth in theology and in God's word, it would be as if he were to take coals from the hot furnace—he would surely be burned."

"And hence it is," said Justus Jonas, "that it takes so long to learn theology, and that one cannot of himself become a thorough theologian."

"Quite right, my Justus," assented LUTHER. "I have not learned what theology I possess all at once. I have had the pope, the universities, and all the learned, and through them the devil himself about my neck; and they are still hanging to me. These have forced me to study the Bible diligently, and thereby to attain at last to a proper understanding of it. One cannot learn any art without practice. What sort of a physician would you be, Dr. Schurff, if you had studied only from your books, and had remained at school all the time? You must bring your knowledge into use, must practice your art, and the more you come in contact with nature the better you will perceive that you do not yet fully understand your profession. Thus, also, one can never understand the Holy Scriptures except by practice—that is, through tribulation and temptation. The dear cross that must be borne is alone the great difficulty. Hence, dear Philip, you have *your* cross as well as I."

"You flatter me, dear doctor, in comparing me with yourself!" replied Melanchthon.

"Not at all, my brother!" answered LUTHER, "whoever does not recognize you as a true teacher, tried by tribulation and temptation, is thoroughly ignorant. Next to the writings of the Apostles, no better book has been written than your *Loci Communes*, in which you teach, and combat, and conquer. And if all the writings of the Fathers were to be melted up into one, they would not make a *Loci Communes*. What you write, Philip, has hands and feet; the *matter* is good, and the *language* is good also. Now the matter of what I write is good, but the language is not good."

"You praise me too much, and yourself too little!" replied Melanchthon. "There is a great difference between us."

"Yes there is," said LUTHER, with a good-natured smile. "I am the prophet Isaiah, and you the prophet Jeremiah. For while Jeremiah was ever afraid that he *reproved too much*, *you* think I thrust too fiercely with a lance, while you pierce only with needles and and bodkins—but such pricks are hard to heal and are exceeding painful. My Philip, you are indeed called simply a *Master*, but you are in truth a *Doctor* above all Doctors. There is no one upon earth, upon whom the sun shines, who has greater gifts than yourself. Whoever despises you must be a man despised of God."

Melanchthon was about to interrupt this flow of compliments, when Madam Luther entered the room, and said, "Gentlemen, supper is ready."

"You see now," said LUTHER smilingly to Melanchthon, who was cut short in his attempt by the unexpected entrance of the lady of the house, "my Katy has confounded all your art. But come along, since

we are invited, lest the halt and the lame be called from the street to take our place at the table."

And they all accepted the invitation of Madam Luther.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FRIENDS AT SUPPER.

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."—Eph. v. 19.

MADAM CATHARINE had prepared a supper in the large adjoining room, which would bear but little resemblance to the brilliant entertainments of our days. Rice soup, bread and fruit were the principal dishes, and two cups of wine for the assembled guests —surely no sumptuous repast.

LUTHER himself offered thanks, beginning with the words of the Psalm, "The eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living creature." Then he repeated the Lord's Prayer, and concluded with the words, "Lord God, heavenly Father, bless us and these thy gifts which we receive of thy goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen."

During the whole of the conversation just related, Dr. Schurff had not removed his searching look from LUTHER, and had thereby become uncertain as to the correctness of his first impressions. Whilst when he entered the room he had found in the look and manner of LUTHER unmistakable evidence of bodily and mental suffering, yet during the conversation in which the great man had taken so active a part, all traces of sickness had vanished. The eyes once more

had their wonted clear, penetrating look, the relaxed skin of his face had become tense, and every feature bespoke a fresh, healthy nature. The physician shook his head thoughtfully, and said to himself, "There is something mysterious in this. May God direct all for the best!"

"I once asked you, dear doctor," began Melanchthon, "whether you could quote me anything from the Bible of which I would not become tired? You said to me then, 'Nothing can be given to a man that he will so love as never to become weary of it.' But I think now there is one such passage, and have just now heard it in your prayer. I mean the LORD'S PRAYER!"

"Yes, you have me there, my Philip, true enough!" replied LUTHER smiling. "But do not forget, no one, except a Christian and believer, who possesses the spirit of faith and of prayer, knows what a strong tower and wall of the church and weapon of the Christian this dear Lord's Prayer is. What an excellent master of language has arranged these words in which rhetoric and oratory so abound, wherein are comprehended all things necessary for soul and for body."

"Of ALL things?" inquired the physician. "Everything that is necessary for man in time and eternity in these few words?"

"Yes, of all things!" repeated LUTHER, positively. "For only observe, the *first three* petitions comprehend and embrace such great, excellent and heavenly things that no mind can entirely grasp them, and they bind together heaven and earth, time and eternity. The *fourth* petition holds as though in a faggot the entire government and economy, everything both spiritual

and temporal that is needful to this life. The *fifth* petition combats against the special evil of a bad conscience, and indeed against both hereditary and actual sin that oppresses the conscience. As regards the *sixth* and *seventh*, which prove the source and end of of all temporal wants, some have thought that they please Christ, if they do not pray *against* temptation, but *for* it, so that they may never be free from errors. But I will never pray for the *least* temptation, but only, *Lead me not into temptation.* Many have had such prayers answered by God, and afterwards have fallen into great temptation from which they have scarcely been able to escape."

"I find one thing very hard to understand in this," said the Baron von Wildenfels. "Christ has modeled the Lord's Prayer so entirely after the Jewish form, that is, upon the *Father* alone, whilst those who pray it are heard only for Christ the Son's sake. Why is this so?"

"I think," replied LUTHER, "that Christ wished not to be honored before his death, and yet our dear Lord knows that we also address ourselves to *him*, for he and the Father are one. I would rather one should take from me my property and my life, than cause me to lose faith in the Lord's Prayer. This wonderful Prayer binds the world so together, that one prays for and with another, and becomes strong and powerful, and even conquers death itself. I myself have never prayed the Psalter methodically, but have selected single portions out of it. But the Lord's Prayer is *my* prayer; this I pray, and I mingle with it portions of the Psalms, that the flippant and false teachers may

be altogether confounded. In short, there is no prayer like the Lord's Prayer; I pray it in preference to all the Psalms."

After a short pause, during which the company partook of the bread and fruit, Justus Jonas spoke: "Dear doctor, when you were just now speaking of the contempt of ungodly people for God's word, I thought of a nobleman of Meissen, who concerns himself about nothing but the accumulation of wealth, and is so much blinded by it, that he is altogether indifferent about the Bible. Only a short time ago our gracious prince John Frederick was talking with this nobleman about the doctrines of the Gospel, but of course without any effect. For immediately this same nobleman answered, "Gracious sir, the gospel is good enough for poor and humble people, but it does not concern your princely Grace."

When LUTHER heard this, he laughed aloud and said, "Was there any bran there?"

The guests looked inquiringly at one another, but no one could imagine what LUTHER meant.

"You don't understand!" he continued, smiling. "Well then, listen to a funny story. Once upon a time the lion invited all the animals to a sumptuous feast, and the hog was invited with the rest. Now when the dishes were being served to the guests, the hog looked about in astonishment and asked—*Is there no bran here?* Thus," said LUTHER when the laughter had subsided, "thus is it with our Epicureans. We preachers set before them in our churches the very best of food, that is, eternal salvation, forgiveness of sins, and God's grace, but they throw up their snouts and

root after the dollars. And why feed nutmegs to a cow? She would rather eat oat-straw."

"The Turkish Emperor is a better Christian than that," said Wildenfels.

"What, Baron!" cried LUTHER in astonishment, "would you compare the crescent to the cross?"

"Permit me to explain," said the Baron. "You know of the recent embassy to the Turks, and that the Turkish Emperor asked of the legates among other things, what sort of a man this LUTHER was, about whom all the world was talking, and how old he was. And when the legate answered that you were a man about forty years old, the Turk exclaimed—I wish that he were younger, he would find in me a gracious master."

"God preserve me from such a gracious master!" said LUTHER, crossing himself. "It is true the Turk acknowledges Christ, and honors Mount Horeb, after a fashion; but he will never rebuild Jerusalem. The Turk will never be overcome except by Christ, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed."

"And so it is with us, dear Doctor MARTIN!" added Melanchthon. "I often think we have many Turks here in Wittenberg who speak much about Christ and honor the law, but will never build up Jerusalem, I mean the Holy Zion, in their hearts. And I have even heard that some are not pleased with your preaching, but prefer other preachers to you."

"I cheerfully grant these the honor, dear Philip," replied LUTHER, "and do not envy them this preference. Yet I know the reason why the people so decide. There are preachers who narrate to the people all sort

of humorous stories, which are listened to with eager admiration. I myself have heard a preacher who explained the books of Joshua and the Kings as if they were amusing stories, the sermon abounding in allegories and spiritual illustrations."

"What do you mean by this, dear husband," asked Madam Luther.

"Well Katy," he answered, smiling pleasantly, "an example is the best demonstration for a woman. I will preach for you this once, dear Katy, in the style of these buffoons. 'My dear hearers, fever is a sickness, rhubarb is a remedy. But do you know the spiritual meaning of this? It means first, fever, that is sin; rhubarb represents Jesus Christ. Secondly, Fever being sin, rhubarb is the antidote to it. Thirdly, Fever signifies damnation, rhubarb the resurrection.' Do you not see, dear Katy, that such preaching is pure jugglery? Such explanation is neither profitable for faith nor godliness, but it is mere child-play, nay silliness, thus to juggle with the Scriptures." And turning to the guests, LUTHER continued: "when I yet wore the monk's hood, I too was a master in this spiritual interpretation, and I allegorized everything. Afterwards, when by studying the Epistle to the Romans, I obtained some little knowledge of Christ, then I saw that the spiritual interpretation was nothing; and saw not what Christ *signifies*, but *who* and *what* he *is*. And now it is my first and best art to teach the scriptures in their simplicity."

"And what do you mean by this!" asked the physician. "The Scriptures are often so obscure and difficult that their meaning is hard to discover."

"And only add to this," said LUTHER quickly, "the real meaning lies not in the reader's mind, but in the text itself. The real meaning, as *the Word itself gives it*, this is effective; in this is life, in this is power, strength and doctrine; in the other there is foolishness, however brilliantly it may sound. It is to be lamented that the people take pleasure in such tomfoolery. For when one preaches on the article concerning justification, that man is saved by faith in Christ alone, he is not regarded by the people as eloquent—nay, they will scarcely listen to him. No sooner does he begin to preach about justification than the people go to sleep and snore; but when one begins to narrate tales and examples, all are on tip-toe, listening eagerly. I believe there are many such orators among us who preach me *under* the bench and *out* again."

"I have no mean opinion of my art," said the physician, "but to be a real preacher of the word seems to me to be the most difficult thing imaginable, especially if one would gain the approbation of the world."

LUTHER smiled and said: "Doctor Augustine, it is difficult and it is not difficult, and I can readily explain to you how a preacher must be qualified who wishes to please himself and the world too. Firstly, he must be *learned*, so that the people may be afraid of his big words even though he should not understand them himself. Secondly, he must have a *fine, elegant delivery*, so that the eyes and ears may be tickled and yet the heart and conscience be not touched. Thirdly, he must be *eloquent*, and know how to tell entertaining stories, especially such as do not touch upon repentance and faith. Fourthly, he must have a handsome

person, which will attract the ladies. Fifthly, he must not take any money for his trouble and labor, but give away more than he receives; and sixthly, he must always speak what the people like to hear. Such a preacher is always welcome to the world!"

"You are not at all complimentary to us poor women," replied Madam Katy.

"But you know, dear Katy, that these words do not apply to you!" said LUTHER. "And they apply only to those who go to church out of idle curiosity and not for edification—and there are certainly not a few such in every congregation. When, however, women *do* receive the gospel, they are much stronger and more ardent in the faith, hold to it much more firmly, than men. Thus Mary Magdalene was more courageous than Peter. Therefore do not be offended, dear Katy, at the assertion that a handsome preacher pleases women better and speaks to them more agreeably than a homely one. It is so, and always will be so; the world lays hold of that which is external rather than on the spirit of the word."

"And thus it has been always!" interrupted Bugenhagen. "The prophets, the apostles, the fathers of the church in all ages, lamented this, and so also do we. The world, that is the great mass, has done nothing but cling to and be satisfied with that which is external, has rejected all God's paternal gifts, as if it had to be so, and has been satisfied that the Lord in heaven has sent down good and perfect gifts to them, the great Giver receiving only ingratitude, if not blasphemy!"

"Yes!" said LUTHER, "when I read Saint Paul's description of the heathen world, in the first chapter of

Romans, I often think that he has painted a picture of the unbelieving world for all time. The life and wisdom of the world consists in this, that it possesses neither faith nor love, and does not wish to possess them. The world has a horror of faith, and flees before the sacred cross, as from the greatest evil and misfortune, and does not know that just in this, faith is exercised and strengthened, and God's power is made manifest."

"Love," said Doctor Schurff, "is more easy to find than faith! I have often seen works of genuine love where there was but little faith, if any."

"Do not deceive yourself, Doctor!" exclaimed LUTHER. "No work of Christian love is possible without Christian faith. Christian love does good *only for the sake of God and of Christ*, and serves every one as far as possible, *without any expectation of reward.* But the world does good for the sake of reward, of honor, of profit. The world knows nothing at all of faith, that it is a sure, firm, necessary confidence solely upon God's grace and mercy, revealed to us in Christ; but it thinks it is only a mere notion and fancy about God, who demands righteousness, that we must be pious and obey God's commands."

"You think then, Doctor," asked the physician, "that all Christian love is at the foundation nothing else than love for God's sake, and the reception of divine grace and mercy?"

"Quite right, my Augustine," replied LUTHER. "The love that is in the world, and which the world practises, *does not see the object* with which it should deal. First, it loses sight of God, for it considers him

an enemy. Secondly, it sees not its *neighbor*, for it thinks there is no other *neighbor* than itself. Thirdly, it does not see *opponents*, for it considers these also as enemies, and does not dream that opposition most of all impels to real love. From this it follows, in short, that the world does not understand the command, *Love thy neighbor as thyself!* Therefore it is inimical to God and everything that is God's, that is, to his word and his saints!"

"That is equivalent to saying," interrupted Melanchthon, "that it is impossible to govern the world by laws."

"Certainly, my Philip," added LUTHER. "You might as well try to guide a wild horse of the desert with bit and bridle, as to try to govern the world, that wishes to know nothing of God, with rules and laws. The world is untractable and unbridled, and cannot be subjected to any law; in short, it insists upon being free as a bird. You have in your grammar, dear Philip," he continued, smiling, "the best picture of the world. Look at the *irregular verbs*, they will not be conjugated according to rule, like the regular verbs, but rather go sideways, clear out of the path into the fields. Then you have the *defective verbs*, which are wanting in this part or that, as the little book in the schools, which you masters call *bellum grammaticale*, shows. Thus is it also in the world, which will not permit itself to be governed by rules and cannot be brought under discipline. Therefore, I say to you, the world is the devil's bride, who drives her so hard that she does willingly only that which her husband wishes. And this we cannot change, we must let it remain *sum, es, est,*

and cannot make it *sum, sus, sut,* for it is a capricious verb in the grammar. The world is like a drunken boor—if you lift him into the saddle upon one side he falls down upon the other. You cannot help him, place him as you will. Thus also the world *will* belong to the devil. Therefore let us watch and pray, for certainly Satan never sleeps. He will do his utmost against God's word, and we ourselves will help him valiantly, with our ingratitude, to banish Christ."

As LUTHER here ceased speaking, his servant, Wolff, entered with a letter addressed to Doctor Pomeranus, and also a small but heavy bag, and laid them both upon the table before the doctor, saying that they had been delivered in the cloister because the messenger had not found Doctor Pomeranus at home.

Bugenhagen opened the letter, and the further he read, the wider he opened his eyes.

"This is a most wonderful thing!" he said at last. "Some one, who does not give his name, has sent me one hundred guilders to deliver to Doctor LUTHER as a present."

"See here, Doctor Augustine," said LUTHER, quickly, and with a smile, "you have just conjured up exactly such a work of love as you have been speaking about."

The physician blushed, and asserted with evident embarrassment that he knew nothing at all about the matter.

"Oh, I believe that thoroughly, dear Doctor!" continued LUTHER. "When the world wishes to do something great, it does it always of itself."

Meanwhile Bugenhagen had opened the bag and

emptied the hundred guilders upon the table. "Only see, Doctor MARTIN," he said, smiling, "how rich you have become."

"Do you really think," cried LUTHER, seriously, "that I would accept such a present? I am fully satisfied with what I have."

"But it is an honest gift!" said Wildenfels. "And you have a full right to it."

"Good," said LUTHER, "and as I have full right to it, I give you, dear Philip, the half of it. Your good wife Catharine will not be angry with it, and your Anna is old enough to play with the ringing guilders. The other half take for yourself, Doctor Pommer, and do with it as you please."

However, both Melanchthon and Bugenhagen hesitated to accept the gift, and urged LUTHER not to refuse it. The physician also urged, "If you do not accept it, inasmuch as you have well earned it, the people who will certainly hear of it may say, Doctor Pommer was mean, and has kept the money for himself."

In LUTHER'S look and manner lay the deepest earnestness, and he answered: "Just because of such people I will not do it. They wish to judge Doctor Pommer, who is a pious, upright man, whilst they themselves are the meanest of men. Do you know why these people give gifts to such men as Doctor Pommer, myself, and others? They wish to appear pure and innocent, although they rob and steal wherever and whenever they can. Believe me, I understand such folks well. They are our Greeks, whom we should fear even though they bring gifts. If they

made such gifts from proper motives, we would be very well satisfied. But there is among them so much scratching and scraping and raking, so much avariciousness and grasping and stealing and robbing, under the guise of the gospel, that I am ashamed of them. I must really preach once more against them, and press them hard, for they irritate me excessively."

"And what shall be done with the money?" asked Bugenhagen, returning to the point.

"You see to it how you may get it back to the right man!" answered LUTHER. "May the good God preserve me from covetousness and mammon. I have discovered in the whole course of my life only two qualities these possess which the Christian can surely do without. The first is that they make us feel secure when everything goes well with us, so that we live without the fear of God. The second is that they teach us in time of trouble, when everything goes ill, to curse God and flee from him and seek a new god. Yet," he interrupted himself and cast a pleasant, smiling look upon his wife, "mammon shall not turn our joyfulness into altercation and grief. Look out on the heavens! The dear Lord God has permitted this beautiful evening that we may go into the garden a while and see that my good wife's fish have not been dried up in the pond. Let us render thanks."

The guests now arose with him, and he prayed, saying: "O, give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Who giveth food to all flesh, who giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry; who delighteth not in the strength of the horse, he takcth not pleasure in

the strength of a man. The Lord hath pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."

Then he again repeated the Lord's Prayer, and concluded with the words, "We thank thee, Lord God, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for all thy benefits, thou who livest and reignest in eternity! Amen!"

CHAPTER X.

MARGARET'S NEW HOME.

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. xviii. 3.

IT is high time for us to see what has become of the poor girl who had been driven from her father's house.

We find her in the house of the magistrate and painter, *Lucas Kranach*, surrounded by his three youngest children, Ursula, Barbara and Anna, who, at the age of ten, eight and six years, were still in that period of childhood to which the word of the Lord, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," may yet be applied.

The three sisters had taken each other by the hand, and were dancing around Margaret, whilst they sung the old rhyme:

"To serve the blessed Mary I ever did aspire,
Yes, e'en to rock her holy babe my heart longed with desire;
Up to His chamber bright she led,
There angels watching o'er His bed
Thus sweetly sang: Praise, glory be
Blest Mary, mother, unto thee."

And now the children rejoiced aloud in all kinds of old-fashioned melodies, as though they wished to *equal* or rather excel the blessed angels. Then they began the rhymes anew, and repeated this play of

dance and song until their little breasts became short of breath.

"And what is the name of the child you wish to rock?" asked the blind girl, referring to the little song they had just finished.

"The same as your name," replied Anna quickly. "Margaret sounds so pretty."

"Yes, and we love you so much," added Ursula. "And you shall not go away again, but stay with us."

"Yes," added Barbara; "father and mother have said you are always to stay with us and play with us."

"But Margaret cannot see," was Ursula's sensible objection.

"Oh, she can see very well," said Barbara. "Is'nt it so, Margaret, you can see? You have two eyes, just as we have."

"But father said," continued Ursula, "that Margaret's eyes were always covered, and that it was always dark with her, just like night. Isn't it so, Margaret?"

"Your father told you the truth," answered the blind girl. "I can not see with my eyes, and yet I see you and know you."

Barbara looked at the blind girl wonderingly, and said: "I suppose you can't sleep either, Margaret, since you can't see?"

"I can though, dear child," rejoined the young girl with a sad smile. "The Lord has not withdrawn his mercy from me altogether. I can sleep, like you, dear children; and I like very much to sleep, for the Lord gives me such sweet, heavenly dreams."

"Well, then, we will rock you to sleep," exclaimed Ursula, joyously. And Margaret, neither wishing nor

able to resist, was pulled into the big arm-chair by the three sisters; her lap was covered with a pillow, and her head concealed under a large cloth.

And now the children again began to dance around her in a ring and sung:

"See, on yonder high hill,
In air pure and mild,
The fond mother Mary
Is soothing her child;
Her arm is His cradle,
Her own snow-white hand
Gently rocks him to slumber,
Nor needs cradle band;
Sleep well, sweet babe,
Sleep well, sleep well."

"Are you asleep now, dear Margaret?" asked little Anna, when the cradle-song had been repeated two or three times, as she peeped under the cloth.

"You dear, good children," answered the blind girl, as she freed herself from the cloth and pillow. Then she stroked the foreheads and cheeks of the little girls, and smoothed their rich curly hair with her soft hand, as she continued: "Alas! why did I not remain a child, like you! If God were not unsearchably wise and good, it would seem to be cruel in him to allow this cold, unloving and sinful life to drive us out of the paradise of childhood. Children, you don't know how happy you are. May God graciously guide and guard you, so that you may not first learn to know the only true happiness of life, when it is too late for you to gain it. But," she interrupted herself, "who taught you those songs which you sing so sweetly?"

"Our mother!" replied little Anna.

Barbara, wiser than her sister, quickly interposed and said: "No, not mother, but Aunt Anna, who is in the convent."

"May *I* not sing you a pretty song now?" asked the blind girl; and when the three sisters had eagerly besought her to do so, she continued:

"You have just now sung about the dear Virgin Mary with her child, but I will sing you a song which is all about the Holy Child:

"Poor man, who may'st thou be?
Tell me!
My crown is highest heaven,
My foot-stool is the earth;
My weapon strong the holy cross,
Who sees me, loves and owns my worth.

"Do you know who that is?"

"Why *that* is no little child," exclaimed Ursula; "*that* must be a tall, tall man, who reaches away up to heaven."

"Yes, indeed, dear Ursula," answered the blind girl. "He does not only reach up to heaven, but into heaven, into the heaven of all heavens, and is so great a Lord, that none like him has ever been on earth, or ever will be. For earth and heaven, and all of us, belong to him; and he loves us all, and the little children most of all."

"But, Margaret, you said," replied Barbara, "that he had a weapon; then I suppose he goes to war and kills people."

"Oh, no," answered the young woman. "This great Lord does not kill anybody; he rather brings the dead to life, and wishes us all to live. He never goes

to war; but wicked and ungrateful men, who are unwilling to thank him for his love, wage war against him; but with his sword—that is, with his holy cross—he defeats all his enemies so that they can accomplish nothing against him. And this great mighty Lord is named Jesus Christ."

"O, yes," was Ursula's gleeful exclamation. "We know him already. Father has told us much about him."

"And do you love him?" asked Margaret.

"Yes, yes," answered the three girls, clapping their hands for joy. "But," added Barbara, "you said that whoever sees him, must love him. We have not seen him yet—have *you* seen him, Margaret?"

"Yes, I have seen him," said the blind girl, and her face glowed with blissful joy. "I see him always, although I am blind. I see him in the only place where you can see him too, deep down in my heart. I see him because I believe on him, and love him. Ah, dear children, how I wish that you may soon see this dear Lord in your hearts."

The girls, touched by a mystery which their minds did not yet understand, gazed wonderingly before them until Ursula said: "But, Margaret, that is not a poor man, who is so great and rich; and yet you have called him so?"

"He *was* indeed poor," replied Margaret. "He became one of the poorest when he came down to earth in the form of a servant; he became poor for our sakes, that we might become rich through him. And to many people he is a poor man even to-day—to those who look only at his cross, but who do not

know that heaven is his crown, and the earth his foot-stool, that he embraces heaven and earth with his power. Do you understand the song now?"

"Yes, yes," answered the children, and added almost with one voice: "Do, dear Margaret, sing us another one. They are nicer than Aunt Anna's songs."

"Gladly, if they please you," continued the blind girl. "Then listen: when you feel how good and gracious this Lord of heaven and earth has been to you, and when you wish to know how deeply grateful you should be to him for it—now, be attentive—here is a little song that will show you how:

"Count the sands of ocean's bed,
Count the glistening stars o'ehead,
Count the creatures of the wold,
Farthings in a mine of gold;
Through the veins each drop that flows,
In the fire, each spark that glows;
Count the leaves the forests yield,
Blades of grass on hill and field,
In the hedge count every thorn,
In an acre, grains of corn;
Blossoms, in the meadows fair,
Myriad motes that skim the air;
Count the minnows in the stream,
Shell-fish which 'neath billows gleam,
Count the drops which oceans form,
Snowflakes, falling in the storm—
And the sum my thanks shall be,
God of all eternity."

"And where, maiden, do you find all these sweet Christian words?" suddenly asked the painter Kranach, who had stepped in from his adjoining studio,

unseen and unheard, clad in his work-dress and holding his maul-stick, brush and pallet in hand. "Margaret, you have brought a real treasure into my house; and I see plainly that I must set up my studio somewhere else. Who can keep on painting when he hears your sweet voice?"

"Pardon me, Mr. Chamberlain," besought the blind girl. "I was afraid that we might disturb you, but I was too weak to resist the urgent appeals of the children."

"Then all I can say is, I wish you were always too weak, Margaret," exclaimed Kranach, kindly. "There is something in the tone of your voice, as well as your subjects, that forces attention upon one's heart and ears. Margaret, you know that I am not given to idle words; but I must say that in you the dear Lord God has sent a good angel to my children."

"How can you speak so kindly of me, a poor, unworthy girl," exclaimed Margaret, modestly. "Do you mean to praise me for telling your children about God and our Lord? I am only following the impulse of my heart. How glad I am to be permitted to speak of the true kindness I find in yourself and your dear wife, who share my faith and my hopes of heaven with me! It is this which makes me feel so happy in your house. Master Kranach, I can never repay you for granting me, the discarded daughter, a refuge in your home."

"If I could only claim some merit in this matter," returned Kranach kindly, "I would gladly boast of it. But this is not my work. When Doctor Martin sends to inquire whether I will receive you, I certainly have

no will but 'yea, yea, Lord. I desire to do what is right, so, of course, will I do what you ask.' I have long known that Doctor Martin greatly resembles the Lord in Heaven, for whatever either sends into my house, is ever sure to be a good thing. But that the doctor may pardon this sinful comparison of mine, I will add: Whatever Doctor Martin sends, he has first obtained from the dear Lord."

Margaret shook her head, her countenance showing that she was deeply pained, and said: "Never! Can a child, spurned and cursed by its father, be a gift of God?

"Surely, Margaret," was Kranach comforting assurance. "Even unbelieving and unrepentant sinners are instruments in the hand of the Lord. Let me remind you of the verse which Doctor Martin recently quoted from holy scripture: "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh."

"You desire to comfort me, dear master," said the blind girl, "and you are only deepening my wound. Are you not by these words condemning my poor father?"

"God forbid that I should do so," replied Kranach; "judgment is the Lord's. Firmly as I believe that the Lord is not willing that any should perish, so confidently do I hope that your father will yet be saved."

"God bless you for that word!" exclaimed Margaret. I am only now learning how dearly I love my father. Although he has cursed me, and driven me away, yet I feel myself bound to him now more closely than ever. I never pray to God without thinking of my poor father

first of all. Alas! Master Kranach, for three whole days I have not heard how he and my sister Catharine are. Can you inform me how I may obtain news of them?"

"I hope," answed Kranach, "that Leonard will come to-day. He is the only one who is able to keep the way open between you and your father. This young man, too, is one of the wonderful instruments of God's grace. As yet I do not know how his destiny is connected with that of your father, but I feel that the hand of God is at work between these two men."

"Yes, you are right," said Margaret, sadly; "even if it be naught but *sin* which has thus far *brought* them together, the *grace* of God will certainly *keep* them together."

"Margaret," spoke Kranach, earnestly, "I can readily understand your love for your father; yea, that you love him now more than you ever did before. My own love toward my good parents was increased when they had chastised me, and that which is true of God, that he chastens those whom he loves, also holds good of us poor human beings—even a stern parent cannot easily sunder the bond of love which binds his child to him, because God himself has so ordered it. But, Margaret, what I admire and esteem in you, particularly, is that you still love your sister, knowing as I do that she always treated you badly, and encouraged your father in his severity toward you."

"I love Catharine, because I suffer through her," replied the blind girl; "my poor sister has no idea how badly she has treated me. Father has told her that

I am the curse of his life; she thinks as father does, and does whatever she thinks pleases him. But when I think of the hour in which the Lord himself, through his Holy Spirit, will bring her to a right understanding of the matter, I tremble for her. I behold her tears of penitence; I feel the voice of her conscience; I see her terrified at the abyss of temporal and eternal ruin, on the brink of which she has been standing. I know that, notwithstanding the ornaments and display of her dress, and all the tender love our father bears her, she is yet more unhappy than I. Yes, I know that Catharine even now wishes me back to my father's house; but she will not suffer a word of it to cross her lips until she has learned humility at the foot of our Lord's cross. Tell me, dear Master Kranach, does not the Lord love us all for the very reason that we are poor, sinful, and unhappy?"

"Margaret," answered Kranach, more earnestly, "I would never have supposed that *you* would enlarge my insight into the mysteries of God. With *open* eyes, I have not yet come to such Christian knowledge as you in your utter blindness. That which lies spread out in your mind like a beautiful landscape, I, poor blind creature that I am, feel compelled to gather piecemeal, and then often do not entirely succeed. Margaret, tell me seriously, whence have you obtained this wonderful knowledge? Have you a special relevation from God?"

"Oh, no!" she rejoined. "How could I, a poor, lowly maid, acquire such advantages? The knowledge I have of the power and comfort of the gospel comes to me from the heart and mouth of the man whom God himself has sent us, our dear Doctor MARTIN

LUTHER. It is now nearly ten years since father read the ninety-five theses to me and sister Catharine, which the bold champion of Christ had nailed to the church-door. Father himself expressed his joy over them; and the light of a better knowledge of the gospel began to shine upon me, although I was still scarcely more than a child; and for the last five years I have hardly missed a sermon of this dear man of God."

"And how could you do this?" asked Kranach. "How could you go to church alone, when your father and sister are so much opposed to the gospel?"

"Father, although he did not give me permission, yet did not forbid it," she replied; "and for this I cannot thank him sufficiently; for this I endured everything else willingly. Next door to us there lived a poor boy, who regularly came when the bells were rung for service, and led me to the house of God."

"And your father and sister never inquired about LUTHER'S preaching?"

"Never," said Margaret. "They did not concern themselves about me, and often for whole days did not exchange a word with me. At first this made me very sad, but later I found this to be a special grace of God; for when I sat in my quiet corner so undisturbed, and pondered in my heart all I had heard, it often happened to me that—but these are childish dreams."

"Say on, Margaret," entreated the master; "you do not know how gladly I listen to you—how I like to look into your sightless eyes whilst you are speaking as though you had an entirely different life and a different light from what we have. Speak on, my child."

"It often happened to me," the blind girl now con-

tinued, her pale cheeks tinged with a transient glow, "that I thought I was sitting among the angels, who were telling me of the glory of the Lord, and of the indescribably happy life of the blessed in heaven, and of the wonderful union of the redeemed with their Redeemer, and that not only the soul, but also the body is imperishable, and lives united to Christ, as the branch to the vine. At another time they told me about the love of Christ to us poor mortals; and this grew and yet grows before me, until I could see a splendor which made my soul melt in unspeakable delight; and then one of the angels said, 'Do you see? This is the way a human heart opens like a blossom in the love of the Lord.' Ah, dear master, do not laugh at me! These are the happiest moments of my life."

"May God deliver me from such a sin," rejoined Kranach, with deep feeling. "I cannot, it is true, grasp or comprehend what you tell me; but my soul trembles with adoration before the infinite grace of God, which compensates you a thousand-fold for what it has denied you, and has opened a *new* world for you, since you cannot see the *old*. But one thing particularly I cannot comprehend. You so often say you *see* such and such things. What do you mean by that, Margaret, as you cannot see?"

"How shall I explain this to you?" said the blind girl with a smile. "I have heard you and all others say, I *see* this thing and that thing, when something is really present before you. And I repeat these words after you, when I wish to say that something is really present in my world, so sure and real that I am often tempted to grasp with my hand at the forms in my

dreams. Every thing has a form within my mind, and every word a body."

"Wonderful child!" exclaimed Kranach. "Tell me, do you ever see our dear Doctor Martin?"

"Oh, certainly," she answered. "And as often as I see him, I must lift up my eyes, because he is so tall. Often too I see an angel at his side, who lays his hand on the doctor's heart, and this always happens when he speaks about the Lord Jesus."

"Girl," said the painter, absorbed in thought, "you charm me with your words. How meagre my art and all the splendor and brilliancy of my colors, compared with the magic of your speech! Oh if you could only paint, you would have to paint the glory of the Lord."

But Margaret shook her head with a smile, and said: "The glory of the Lord is the only thing in my world which has no body, and for which I have no words."

"You are right. How foolish I am!" exclaimed Kranach, lapsing into profound meditation.

In this he was disturbed by a knock at the door, which was opened to admit our young artist, Leonard Fichtner.

CHAPTER XI.

LEONARD AND MARGARET.

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." 1 John iv. 8.

"WHAT news do you bring us from Homberger?" asked Kranach of the young man.

"Nothing favorable, as yet," was the sad reply of the latter, as he greeted Margaret, whilst the three little sisters welcomed him as if he were an old friend of the family, and twined themselves about him. "The poor man," he continued, "remains sunk in stupor. He speaks not a word, demands neither food nor drink, and lets Catharine feed him as though he were an infant. Not even a word of complaint crosses his lips."

"And does he not even mention my name?" inquired Margaret, timidly.

"No," answered Fichtner; "but still your name is one of the means by which to arouse him from his gloomy reveries. Twice did I mention your name to him; then he looks at me, his weary eye acquires life, his breast heaves with a deep sigh, and then all is over."

"God have mercy on my poor father!" ejaculated Margaret.

"He will have mercy on him," said the young man.

"Yes, he certainly will," added Kranach, laying his hand on Margaret's brow; "be of good cheer, my child. The true Shepherd and Bishop of our souls is

more anxious to seek those who have gone astray and are in danger of being lost. And you, my dear friend," he said, turning to the young man, "be so kind as to come into my studio. I have a few words more to say to you." With these words he retired.

Fichtner now turned to Margaret, and said, "Have you no inquiries to make about your sister, Catharine?"

"Certainly, sir," said the blind girl, quickly. "What are her feelings towards me? Would she not like to know where I am?"

"I have told her," continued Leonard, "that you have found a good and pleasant place of refuge, and this has satisfied her. If I mistake not, she would like to know where you are staying; but this question requires a penitent heart."

Margaret shook her head, and with a serious look, said:

"You may be in the right when you speak of Catharine and father in this way; but still your words oppress my conscience. You speak as if *all* were guilty *except myself*. And yet I feel that they would not have gone so far if I had borne my lot with greater patience. I should have *begged* for love, as a beggar begs for money—persistently. But I shut up my heart obstinately; I was silent, when I should have spoken."

"You say this now," rejoined Leonard, with sympathy, "since you have attained to a better Christian knowledge; since your own bitter lot has permitted you to cast a deeper look into the mysteries of God. Yes, Margaret, this is what grieves me, too. The more I recognize the infinite love of God towards us poor men, the greater appears my guilt before God.

See, Margaret," he continued, "I have hitherto imagined that I, too, was acquiring the true knowlege of God, when I searched out His judgments with regard to my fellow-men, and warned or comforted others. But in permitting the affairs of others to absorb my attention, I became a stranger to myself. Since then I have found that I myself am the only one in whom I am to recognize the judgments of God, that I am to speak to *my own heart*, since I know that my own guilt is always great enough."

"And does this not make you sad?" asked the blind girl.

"Certainly," replied the young man. "And if I were still under the influence of popery, I should torment myself with all sorts of penance, and would try to make good my past sins by future good works. But now I know that there is no true peace in such repentance, and that nothing and no person can help me if I do not believe that in Christ my sins are forgiven, and that only the *just live by faith;* and because I believe this, as our MARTIN LUTHER teaches and believes, on the basis of Holy Scripture, I have peace with God, nothwithstanding all my guilt, and am glad and of good cheer because my sins are forgiven; and the works which I do, thus penitent and repentant, do not procure reconciliation and forgiveness for me, but bear witness to me and my Lord that I believe in him from my heart, and am obedient to his will."

"Oh, why do you not continue?" exclaimed Margaret. "I am so fond of hearing you speak of that which joins me with other souls in faith and hope. I have not up to this time enjoyed the happiness of hav-

ing a companion in the struggle, who could walk with me toward the same goal, and speak the same language. I feel as though you had come to me in a strange land, where no one understood my language or thoughts, and where in the course of time I had forgotten my childhood and my home. And now you have come, dear sir, and converse with me in the familiar language of my former home, so dear to my heart. It is the *old* loved language, and yet *new*. Do you not experience this same thing? Do you not discover every new knowledge of the good and gracious will of God as an old truth, known to you before, but only forgotten for a time beneath the cares and burdens of life?"

"Ah, the purity and wealth of your language!" said Fichtner. "This question of yours suddenly reveals to me the gulf which still separates me from you without my having known it. I am too weak to gaze into the depths of your faith, but I feel that you are truly a child of God. Whilst I receive into my inner life every new knowledge of the pure gospel as though it were a new structure, erected on the spot where the old one has been destroyed, to you the holy Zion of the mystery in Christ is only veiled, and when uncovered, appears before your inner eye with every one of its stately parts complete. It must be this of which holy Scripture tells us that our life is *hidden* with Christ in God, a revelation within us of the lost paradise."

Whilst they were thus engaged in conversation, the three little sisters had withdrawn to a corner of the room, and were quietly engaged in play and talk.

But now their voices became louder. Fichtner saw little Barbara, with a cloth thrown over her head and her father's large cane in her hand, step before the other sisters, bent like a poor beggar-woman.

And now Ursula approached the little pilgrim with sympathetic gestures, saying:

> "Poor man, who may'st thou be?
> Tell me."

And then Barbara unveiled her curly head with its blond locks, raised the staff, and, holding it up before her, recited:

> "My crown is highest heaven,
> My footstool is the earth;
> My weapon strong the holy cross;
> Who sees me loves, and owns my worth."

Ursula and Anna now hastened toward their sister to verify the words of the song, and embracing and kissing her, they joyously exclaimed: "Once more, Barbara; once more!"

Fichtner cast a smiling glance at the children, and said: "How true are the words of father LUTHER, that the sins of children are nothing else than the forgiveness of sins. In their plays they sin without knowing it, but love takes their sin away. Margaret, do you not also feel that reconciliation is possible only in love."

"Let us love him, for he first loved us," said the blind girl to herself, in a low tone. "Does not the Bible say: 'Whosoever abideth in God sinneth not?'"

"Yes," affirmed Leonard, "the beloved John says

that. But it might also be written: 'Whosoever *loveth* God sinneth not.'"

"It is most certainly so in deed and in truth," said Margaret; "but for our poor hearts there is still a great difference between the words. When St. John says: 'Whosoever *abideth* in God sinneth not,' I know that I shall sin as long as I live here on earth; for how could I, with all my striving, reach so far as to abide in God as the branch in the vine? Does not every weakness, every folly, every error, which agitates my soul in a thousand different ways, separate me for a time from God? Therefore St. John rightly says: 'Whosoever *abideth* in God sinneth not!' That guards me against all pride, and directs me with all my hopes to heaven, where alone I shall abide in God, since there alone removed from the body of this death I shall sin no more. But if St. John had said: 'Whosoever *loveth* God sinneth not,' many a weak and proud heart would believe itself to be free from sin, because it *thinks* that it *loves* God. All who are asked whether they love God will be likely to answer yes, without any scruples. Does it follow that they are free from sin? Their very affirmation is a sin whereby they deceive themselves, for they do *not* love God in deed and in truth."

"Are you not too strict, Margaret?" asked Leonard. "Can you not regard it possible that we may really and truly love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength?"

"No;" answered the blind girl, with a sad smile; "as long as we continue in the body, never! The same beloved apostle says: '*There is no fear in love;*

but perfect love casteth out fear.' But fear and love are the actual life of our souls up to the death of the body; and such a state of the heart as little perfect as it is, is the very highest a human heart can attain on earth. Many neither *fear* nor *love* God; many indeed *fear* God, but do not love him; it is only the true Christian who both *fears* and loves *God.* But to *love God without fear* is possible only to the dear angels and the redeemed spirits."

"Margaret," exclaimed the young man, "you are opening up to me a new insight into the mysteries of the divine kingdom. But let me have a still fuller view of what you behold. Make your words clearer to me: you seem to be a prophetess."

Margaret placed her left hand over her eyes, as though she would shield her sightless eyes from a blaze of light; the other hand she laid on her heart, and said:

"Dear sir, you must not exalt a mortal if you would love and praise God. Whether what I have told you is a glimpse into the mysteries of God, I know not; even our most heart-felt love of God is subject to error, for our greatest love is often nothing but weakness and folly; but would you cast a glance into the secrets of my faith and of my love toward God, then will I gladly talk with you; for you make me happy when you speak with me of God."

"Yes, I will do that as long as I have breath and life,'' exclaimed Leonard, with enthusiam; and grasping Margaret's hand in his own, he pressed it to his heart, "may these children, with their simple, innocent hearts, be witnesses of my vow."

"I do not understand you and your vows," said Margaret, although her glowing cheeks indicated a knowledge which she would fain conceal. She quickly regained her composure, and then proceeded:

"Fear and love are the two sources of true Christian purity—the alternating pulsations of our inmost soul-life. Fear and love are the two sides of the human heart, of which one does what is good from fear of God's wrath and punishment, the other from love of God's goodness and faithfulness. Fear and love, *now acting separately, and now together, are the steps by which we ascend to God.*"

"But did you not speak," observed Leonard, "of the state of a heart, which neither fears nor loves God?"

"Yes, sir," replied Margaret, "that is the lowest stage of faith in God and knowledge of God which man can occupy. Beyond that we find hatred and enmity against God, and last of all a denial of God. To be without the fear and love of God is the state of the natural man, whose heart is moved neither by the thought of God's judgment, nor by the remembrance of divine benefits, who lives *without any sense of accountability;* who does good without joy in God, and evil without penitence for having offended God; who does nothing for God's sake, but all for his own."

"Why, that is denying God," interrupted Leonard with horror.

But Margaret calmly continued: "Not so, dear sir. We cannot say that such a man is an atheist; he does not, indeed, acknowledge God, nor on the other hand does he deny him. I once heard from Luther's own lips that the sun, moon and stars run their courses in

heaven. I often picture this to my mind and would like for once to see it as those do who are blessed with sight, and have often thought to myself that all possessed of vision must speak of it daily, because it is so great and wonderful. But alas! no one even mentions it; men act as though there were no sun or moon or stars, and Father Luther is the only one who has spoken to me of such wondrous works. Now it seems to me, that as it may be a matter of perfect indifference to the natural man, whose whole life consists of physical labor and physical enjoyment, whether and how the stars go on their courses, so he may be altogether indifferent as to *whether* God *lives* and *governs* or *not*, whether he will render judgment or not. And of all with whom I have become acquainted, the majority occupy this lowest grade, and may, if God does not have mercy on them, in all their life never come to the fear or love of God. Does not my own sister occupy this grade? for I have remarked that although she often speaks of God and the saints, yet she neither fears nor loves God truly."

"How true are your words!" exclaimed Fichtner. "You have but pictured to me my own heart's condition, as it was only a few years ago. You are right; I did not deny God, but I surely did *not* acknowledge him; I was, it is true, on my guard against certain sins, did some things which I looked upon as good works; but it was neither the fear nor the love of God which kept me *from* the one or moved me *to* the other. I always thought of myself, or at most of my dear parents."

"Do you imagine," asked Margaret, "that I have not

occupied this grade? I have no one but the faithful Father Luther to thank for waking me out of my sleep of death and driving me to fear God."

"And how was that, dear Margaret?" asked Leonard.

"I am speaking of the second degree of knowledge of God," answered the young girl, "namely, of the state of heart of those who indeed *fear* God, but do not yet *love* him; and this is really the first right step toward God. In such a state of heart are all those who can no longer deny the power of evil and the punishment of sin. God, the punisher and judge, has revealed himself to them so clearly that their heart can no longer doubt it, and their conscience is in fear as often as they compare their outward and their inner life with the commandments of God. They recognize their sin, but they do not yet repent of it, or they are urged by a false repentance to do works of penance, which for a time, it is true, put the wakened conscience to sleep, but can give no real peace. At times they take cordial delight in that which is good, but have no serious desire to amend their lives, since they know full well that they must then change their whole heart and life; they often look with real desire toward the victory, but they have no courage for the struggle. They fear God, but they do not yet love him."

"That," said Leonard thoughtfully, "is a true picture of life under the law, without the comfort of the gospel. Yes, now I plainly see why the law imparts no peace, but only accuses, judges and condemns. In the law there is simply the fear of God, who punishes all who transgress his commandments. Hence we

only fear the wrath of God, for we can not love him if we do not know that he forgives us our sins. Alas, I have experienced all this in my own heart."

"Thank God," added Margaret, "that you have not remained at this Old Testament stage! Because at this point, where the right fear impels to love, there are not too many in Christendom; for this is already the beginning of true, Christian regeneration. In addition to this we must have a correct and clear knowledge of the just, as well as good and gracious will of God, as it is revealed in his commandments; but even more than this, we must always know and feel that we have transgressed the commandments of God. And but few reach this point. Fear, but no *love;* anxiety in thinking of God, but no *peace.* Alas! how very many never escape from this torture of the soul as long as they live. And, dear sir, you will not find fault with me, when I tell you that my dear father now stands on this plane; I say it with joy and gratitude to God, for I know that the merciful God will not let him continue in such tribulation."

"There is only one thing," remarked Fichtner, "which hinders my apprehension of this subject. You called the fear of God, which is without love, *the time of the Old Testament;* in which case the gospel of the grace of God might be termed *the time of the New Testament.* Might not that tempt us to esteem the ten commandments of God lightly, and to say that the true Christian no longer needs these commandments, since grace in Christ is all in all to him?"

"O no, dear sir," rejoined Margaret, "the commandments of God are and remain forever the law in the

kingdom of God, and the only means of awakening our desire for grace in Christ. Only think of the natural man, who neither fears nor loves God; since he knows neither God's justice nor mercy. Must not the unregenerated man first know and recognize that the Lord in heaven is holy and just, that the sinner cannot stand before Him—that sin must be punished, and that for this reason sinful man would forever have to be excluded from all blessed communion with God in Christ if his sins were not wiped out? The law must first awaken us from the death-sleep of sin, fill us with fear of God's wrath and judgment, and impel us to a desire for grace. No one learns to love God aright, unless he has first feared Him. But when we love God, then only do we deeply feel that we *must* keep God's commandments, in order to prove our obedience to God's law, and to show our faith by its fruits."

"But do we *then* become perfect doers of the law?" inquired Leonard.

Margaret smiled sadly, and said:

"If we could do that, dear sir, we should need no Saviour and Redeemer, and we would be saved by the works of the law. He who remains, as it were, on this half-plane of the knowedge of God, is tempted to say: Since I cannot fulfill the commandments of God perfectly, I will not fulfill them at all; and he will surely again become a child of the world, and make shipwreck of his faith. But he who loves Christ as the giver of salvation, will keep his commandments, and say: Even though I know that all my piety consists of merely spasmodic efforts, yet I also know that in Christ my sins are forgiven; and although I know

that I can be saved by the free grace and mercy of God alone, yet I can show my faith in Christ in no other way than by good works of the law."

"Yes, it must be so," exclaimed Fichtner joyously. "In this way only I have peace in my soul, and thus only is the enigma of the conflict between law and grace solved. But," he continued entreatingly, "you owe me a further explanation of what you said on *fear and love*. You spoke of those who fear God, but do not yet love him. Now I trust you will tell me of those who love God, but do not fear him."

"Would you," said Margaret with a smile, "with one step stride from humanity into the realm of the angels? Between these two points you have yet another stage, and that is the gospel. Between the man, who only fears God, and the angel, who only loves God, there stands the Christian, who fears *and* loves God; who feels and knows the penalty of sin with the same force with which he feels the forgiveness of sin; who neither goes so far as to despair of grace and mercy in the conviction of his guilt and unworthiness, nor so far, on the other hand, as to be lukewarm towards sin and God's judgment through a false hope of God's grace. The Christian heart continually goes onward between fear and love. To-day there is the fear of God, for our heart and conscience accuse us; to-morrow love to God, because the comfort of sin repented of and forgiven quickens our heart. In these constant conflicts between fear and love the growth of the inner man is found, the gradual approach to perfect manhood in Christ Jesus. On this plane there are always but a few, the truly faithful

servants and confessors of the Lord, who are no longer ashamed of the gospel of Christ, and to whom the reflection from the cross is the light on their pathway. As long as the Christian lives here below he proceeds on his way in both the fear and the love of God."

"Yes," said Fichtner in a low tone, speaking to himself, "that was the state of heart in which my poor mother lived. How often she was so full of bliss in her faith in the Lord, so much so that she comforted and encouraged me and father from her bed of sickness; and how often again so despondent and timid that all our words of comfort had no influence over her! At that time I knew not, and only learn to-day from your lips, that this very feeling alternating between fear and love, was the growth of her faith. Ah, how must it be, when we only love God and no longer fear him!"

"No human foot reaches this height of communion with God," said the blind girl. "That is the state of divine knowledge where *love is become perfect and has driven out fear;* that is the plane of the blessed spirits of the redeemed, whom the Lord has taken from the sufferings of this present time unto himself into everlasting glory. That is the pinnacle of the everlasting temple, which we only behold afar off with believing hope, and whither the way leads only through death. I often enjoy hours in which in anticipation I feel how it will be when the soul's entire life is naught but love to God. But for this I have no language; *I rejoice in hope.*"

"Margaret," now began the young man, a tremu-

lous tone pervading his words, "Margaret, I am blessed, too; and doubly so through you. Let me ask you a question. We people with eyes say that man's soul is manifest in the glance of his eye. Your eye is dead, but your whole countenance tells me that Christ is truly your life. Margaret, you cannot see me in the body, but your inner eye is wonderfully clear. Tell me, Margaret, what do you think of me?"

The girl's expression, and her movements, betrayed the greatest surprise and confusion. "What induces you to put such a question, dear sir?" she at length asked.

"I can endure it no longer," continued Leonard, his voice choked with emotion. "Margaret, the history of my life is wonderful. The hand of the Lord has hitherto been so clearly visible in all the vicissitudes of my career, that I could not ignore it even if I would. Margaret, I have the courage to tell you: It is God's will that we should be united in time and in eternity. Margaret, your very name is dear to me. Will you, can you be mine, as I am yours for life and for death?"

Ere Leonard had ceased to speak, the flush on Margaret's cheeks had disappeared, and tears began to flow down her snow-white face. "Do not touch me now, Leonard," she anxiously entreated, when she perceived that he had approached nearer to her. "I knew it before you told me. I beg you to permit me to be alone."

"Margaret," exclaimed Leonard, sadly, "will you banish me from your presence just at this time?"

"Not on your account, but for my own sake," she

answered, with a heart oppressed by emotion. "O, leave me to myself, dear sir!"

"And must I go without an answer, without hope?" asked Leonard. "Margaret, do you know that the blessing of my sainted mother rests on you and me? Do you know that her own reconciliation with God is made complete in our love?"

"I know it all," answered the blind girl. "In my loneliness I ought to regard your language as a trial whether I have overcome the pride of my heart or not. But I can not do it. I know that the Lord wills it thus; and I should yield myself up to the will of my Lord *without a struggle*."

"Then you will be mine, Margaret, for time and eternity?" asked the young man with excitement.

The blind girl covered both eyes with her folded hands, and said solemnly: "When I rest my head on my father's heart for the first time, and his curse has been changed into a blessing, then will I answer you, even though you do not ask me again. But now leave me to myself."

But Leonard said with emotion: "Margaret, now I understand the promise of the Lord: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' At this moment, Margaret, you only love God, and do not fear him. Now *your love* is become perfect."

She smiled sadly and said: "I have *never feared* God *more* than I do *just at this very time;* therefore, leave me to myself, Leonard."

"Margaret," exclaimed the young man, "you occupy too lofty a plane for me. Draw me up to yourself, and pray for me!" And he slowly withdrew from the room.

But the children had taken her by the hand and danced as they sang:

"Count the sands of ocean's bed,
Count the glistening stars o'erhead,
And the sum of thanks shall be,
God of all eternity."

And Margaret softly murmured to herself:

"This the sum of sins forgiven
This my portion is in heaven."

CHAPTER XII.

LUTHER ILL AND DESPONDENT.

"For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, saying, God hath forsaken him; persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him." Ps. lxxi. 10, 11.

BETAKING ourselves again to the study of LUTHER, we enter into the presence of a sick man. His bowed head resting on his hand, he is seated at his table, with a blank gaze of sad contemplation. Melanchthon and Justus Jonas are with him, endeavoring to encourage and comfort him.

"Your consolation is of no avail," he tells them. "Better pray for me, who, a poor rejected worm, am so graciously visited with sadness and depression of spirit. But I must not murmur or complain. May all be done in accordance with the good and gracious will of our merciful Father in heaven! Glory, honor and praise be to him, even in this my great anxiety and need!"

"Is there then no prospect of improvement in your condition?" inquired Melanchthon.

"None," answered LUTHER, shaking his weary head. "This vertigo will prove my death. I feel as though all the supports on which my head might rest, were torn away. A deadly, racking pain pervades my whole soul, and robs me of all comfort and courage, as if I had committed some deadly sin, which can never be pardoned. I derive no benefit from medicine, although

I follow the directions of my physician closely. I am often tempted to question whether I have done right in kindling such a flame in Christendom."

"Dear Doctor," cried Justus Jonas, in amazement at this, "what do you mean by such an expression?"

"I bear the wrath of God," continued LUTHER dejectedly. "For I have sinned against him. The pope, the emperor, the princes, the bishops, yea the whole world, hate me and pursue me. And this does not suffice; even my brethren and friends annoy me; and besides all this, my sins, death and the devil, rage against me without ceasing."

"But all these," rejoined Jonas consolingly, "are subject to the *one* Lord Christ."

"Yea, truly," said the sick man. "But if Christ, on whose account they hate me, were to desert me, what else could sustain and comfort me?"

"The Lord will never do this!" exclaimed Jonas in the confidence of faith. "Do you wish to put Christ's word and promise to shame in your person?"

"O no, dear Jonas," answered LUTHER. "Though I am indeed the lowliest among men, yet the Lord will not forsake me, a miserable sinner. Ah, would to God that Erasmus and the Sacramentarians could feel the anguish of my heart for only one quarter of an hour! How safely I might say that they would be completely converted and set aright. But now my enemies are alive and powerful, they inflict one injury after another on me, and persecute him whom God has visited." But here he broke off abruptly, and spoke in a tone of better cheer, "Let this suffice, lest I complain to excess and become impatient at the rod

of God, which strikes and heals, kills and makes alive. His holy, benevolent and perfect will be praised! It can not be otherwise. He whom the world and its prince hates, must be acceptable to Christ. Were we of the world, then the world would love its own."

"But since you are *not* of the world," promptly added Jonas, "in the words of the Lord, the world hates you. You have only done that to which the Lord has called you. You have preached the Word of God in its purity, and have not corrupted it, as the papists do, and you have not sought honor or riches by your course."

"Yes," said LUTHER, "that is all my glory. I hope that the gracious God, who has begun to have mercy on me, will continue this mercy to the end, since I seek nothing else, and have no greater hunger or thirst than to have my God gracious unto me. And he is truly gracious and merciful, as the Scripture bears witness of him, not only to those who fear him and hope in his mercy, but he even offers to be so to those who are still his contemners and enemies, if they will only turn from their sinful ways, as he speaks by the prophet, confirming his words with a precious oath: "*As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*"

"But," he said, interrupting himself, and taking hold of the table with both hands as he rose, "there is even now a roaring in my head which oppresses my heart with anxiety. Let me go into my chamber for a few minutes; the Lord must come to my aid—there is no other way."

As he tottered toward the door, his two friends advanced to support him, but he motioned them away, and said, "I pray you desist! Were the pope to learn that I can no longer walk without help, he might exult and say: 'God has punished LUTHER for his heresy.'"

Hardly had he entered the chamber and closed the door, when the family physician, Dr. Augustine Schurff, arrived.

"What do you think of our dear father's illness?' asked Melanchthon and Jonas in the same breath.

Schurff shrugged his shoulders and said:

"It is a mysterious, puzzling ailment. No medicine will make any impression. May the heavenly Physician take him under his holy protection."

"It strikes me," said Jonas sadly, "that this sudden weakness of our dear father ought to be a warning to us all, by which God reminds us that we should be ready for death."

"Are you apprehensive of apoplexy?" Melanchthon inquired of the physician.

"God forbid that!" answered Schurff. "To the best of my judgment, I regard the seat of the disease to be in the stomach, and not in the head. I am still hopeful."

"And do you know of no remedy?" asked Melanchthon, "by which this awful spirit of melancholy can be exorcised?"

Schurff for a while remained lost in silent reflection, and then said:

"It seems to me that the evil spirit can be expelled only by the good spirit. Could you induce our dear

father to do battle right zealously, he would, I trust, overcome his despondency. The spirit is mighty, and can conquer bodily temptations."

"I think you are right," said Melanchthon, with glad approval. "It is now more than ever necessary for Dr. MARTIN to wield his two-edged sword, and contend against the fanatics and sacramentarians. Yes, we will rouse him to battle. He must take the field. Aid me faithfully to accomplish this result, dear Jonas."

Just as Jonas was on the point of acceding to this request, LUTHER re-entered. The peace of prayer sat upon his countenance; not indeed the blissful rest of perfect gladness, but still a quiet acquiescence in the will of God. On seeing the physician he accosted him:

"Have you found the herb which is to cure me? Now do not be alarmed, Doctor Augustine," he continued, pleasantly, when he noticed his physician's perplexity, "our Lord has a Hebrew language, which must be studied well before one can ascertain his will and counsel. If the herb grows anywhere on earth, you will doubtless find it. '*Melius est tentari, quam inflari:*' it is better to be tempted than to become proud."

"Do you feel better?" asked Melanchthon.

"A little," he answered; and continued with a smile, "Now I know, dear Philip, that I am once more LUTHER. But there is no trust to be placed in these changes for the better; there is no cessation as yet of this roaring sensation."

"It would almost seem," said Melanchthon, jestingly, "as though this roaring came from Rotterdam. Erasmus has great skill in raising storms; his '*Hyper-*

aspistes,' which he has just put forth against you and our cause, rushing along like an evil spirit, seeking to regain its lost place. Have you read this book of Erasmus, doctor? and will you not reply to him?"

"Not yet," answered LUTHER, dejectedly. "How can I, a sick servant of Christ, read—I who am hardly alive—to say nothing of writing a book? Does the Lord intend to overflow with his flood? And the very persons who ought to sympathize with me seek to break me down with more labors, when I am already tried and troubled more than I can bear. God be gracious to such friends, and teach them better!"

"Amen," added Jonas. "And yet these factions are so lamentably distracting the Church! O, that there were a few who would earnestly oppose the cruel rage of Satan, and become walls about the house of Israel in the day of the terrible wrath of the Lord, when he shall visit our great ingratitude as we deserve! O Lord Jesus, how great will be the disorder in the future, if things are already at such a fearful pass, when the Reformation has scarcely made a fair start!"

LUTHER regarded Jonas attentively, whilst the latter was speaking, and at every word his eyes became more animated. "The 'heavenly prophets' will not destroy my work," he said with zeal. "This sect is so formidable, that it has gained five or six heads in one year. The first is Carlstadt, with his *this*. He wishes to teach us a new Greek language, and says that Christ in the words: *This* is my body, did not point to the bread, but but to his body; and his only object in this is to dese-

crate the sacrament. Ah, what an excellent man Dr. Carlstadt is, to find out something which is concealed from all the rest of the world; and yet he wears a gray coat and a felt hat in great humility, and will not be called *Doctor*, but *neighbor* Andrew. Truly," he added in bitter satire, "Carlstadt deports himself as if God and the Holy Spirit dwelt in him entire."

"And whom do you call the second head of this sect?" inquired the physician.

"The other," proceeded LUTHER, "is *Ulrich Zwingle* with his *signifies*. This new interpreter wishes to convert the *essence* into the *semblance*, and twists the word *is* into the word *signifies*. The third is *John Œcolampadius*, with his *figure 'of my,'* who thinks that he has done wonders, when he overthrows Zwingli and his *signifies*, and instead of this says: the *body*, that is to say, the *sign of the body*. They are *excellent* people, to my mind, who twist and explain the word of scripture as it happens to suit them! The fourth and the fifth and the sixth and the seventh are all as bad. Each one wishes to show himself master as regards the sacrament. 'The devil is master of a thousand arts.'"

"And a very mighty master he is," added Jonas.

"And one who governs in a masterly way," continued LUTHER. "He proves this not only by the way in which he governs his world in all sorts of cunning, trickery and rascality, but also beyond all measure in those spiritual matters, which concern the honor of God and the conscience of man. How he can twist, drag, turn and guide himself in every direction, and everywhere block the way, so that no one may be saved and abide in the truth as it is in Christ!"

"From the very earliest times all heretics have made Holy Scripture subservient to their peculiar views," said Melanchthon.

"That is precisely the devil's snare," continued LUTHER. "At first the Bible was an empress among Christians; now it has become a book of heresies, and the Bible seems to me like a worn net, in which everyone has torn a hole. The fools! what is their object in disputing about the Scriptures and divine subjects, which they do not understand? At present they are only attacking the sacrament, but you will live to see them going further, and saying that baptism and original sin, yea, Christ himself, are naught."

"May God graciously preserve us from that!" said Jonas. "We will admonish, warn and threaten, until these people are convinced of their fanaticism."

LUTHER shook his head seriously, and said: "Where God does not defend and help, our work and counsel are in vain. What can we do with those who imagine that the devil is in Babylon at this very time, or asleep like a dog on a cushion, and do not think that he is near them with his poisoned, fiery arrows? I have had some experience in the matter. But no one will believe me until he becomes wise by experience."

"You must not forget, dear doctor," remarked the physician, "that your writings are nevertheless making their way into all the world, and are read eagerly and with blessed results."

"Of what avail is it if I do write much?" asked LUTHER. "The fanatics and sacramentarians despise me, and do not deem me worthy of a thoughtful

reply. All they care about doing is to look at my books, turn up their noses, and say: '*There is no spirit in them.*'"

"It is astonishing," rejoined the physician, "how even cultured, learned men, permit themselves to be caught with such loose talk, in which, notwithstanding the outward humility, the inward pride is yet discernible."

"That is caused by the *novelty* of fanaticism," answered LUTHER. "We Germans are beyond denial disposed to attach ourselves to what is new, and to cling to it like fools; and if any one endeavors to restrain us, it makes us wilder still in its favor; but if no one restrains us, we soon become sated and weary of it ourselves, and are on the lookout for some other novelty. Thus the devil always has this advantage, that no doctrine or fanatical notion, however clumsy, can arise, but that it finds disciples; and the clumsier it is, the better."

"Nevertheless, you must oppose them," rejoined Melanchthon. "Even if not for the sake of these heretics, yet for the sake of the weak and simple."

"That is the only thing which can impel me," answered LUTHER, "for I have no hope of the conversion of those who teach heresy or fanaticism. The conversion of the *author* of a false doctrine is something unheard of. For such a sin is too great, because it blasphemes the Word of God and sins against the Holy Ghost; hence God permits such persons to become hardened. For this reason, too, the old prophets, and the holy apostles, and all the learned doctors, have never converted an arch-heretic."

"Do you mean by that," asked Jonas, "that these errors were never properly assailed and refuted, so that the false teachers themselves could have been convinced of the truth?"

"O no," responded LUTHER. "Their hearts were possessed of conceit—that was and is the sole cause. Place whatever color you wish before him who looks through a painted glass—he will only see the color of his glass. The glass must first be removed, or no truth will avail. But God alone is able to effect this, not we. However," he went on with increasing excitement, "this shall not prevent me from setting forth the truth before their eyes sufficiently clear and plain. Even though I be unable to convert the *arch-fanatics*, yet I will pluck away from them some of their *disciples*, and strengthen the simple and weak, and guard them against the poison of error. And should this also fail (which God forbid), I will nevertheless confess before God and all the world, and bear witness, that I do not, nor ever did, nor ever will, side with these blasphemers of the sacrament and fanatics, and that I will have my hands entirely free from the blood of the souls which they steal from Christ. For I have done my part, and am innocent of their work."

"They are of course unwilling to admit," objected Melanchthon, "that they are the enemies of God and his word; they appeal to the fact that in all other points they think much and highly of God's word, of the whole gospel; that on one point alone, respecting the sacrament, they are of a different opinion."

"Dear Philip," rejoined LUTHER with impetuous zeal, "*God's word is God's word.* Whoever blasphemes

God by charging him with falsehood in *one* word, or says it is a trivial matter to thus blasphemously call him a liar, that man blasphemes God in toto, and deems *all blasphemies* to be of small account. God is *one*, and may not be divided, or praised in one place and reproached in another, honored in one place and despised in another. We must either believe *all* of God's words or *none*."

"But is not this want of harmony among Christians to be regretted?" asked Melanchthon. "Zwingli and Carlstadt and Œcolampadius, and all who are opposed to us on this point, feel this, and acknowledge that they would like to be on good terms with us."

"Yes, yes, my Philip," answered LUTHER, with greater zeal than before; "Judas betrayed the son of man with *a kiss*. The friendliness and humility of our sacramentarians is nothing else than a *Judas peace* and a traitor's kiss. They are very cordial in their demand that we only remain silent and look on whilst they are leading souls away. In things secular I shall gladly be at one with them, and keep the peace in temporal matters, but in spiritual matters I shall avoid and reprove them as long as my breath lasts."

In delivering this speech LUTHER had again become the bold soldier of Christ; all traces of melancholy had disappeared; his eyes flashed as though lit up with heavenly fire. The physician looked with admiration on the man who had such power over severe bodily pain, and he was anxious to preserve this preponderance of the mind. "I am," said he, "as a layman, not yet well acquainted with the question in controversy."

"The question at issue," interposed Melanchthon quickly, before LUTHER could reply, "is on the words of Christ in the Holy Supper: '*This is my body.*' Now Ulrich Zwingli and the men of that class here say: the word *is* has the same import as the word *signifies*, and Œcolampadius writes that the words *my body* are equivalent to *sign* and *type* of *my body*. According to Zwingli our Lord wished to say: Take, eat, this bread *signifies my body;* but according to Œcolampadius the Lord intended to say: Take eat, the bread is the *sign of my body*."

"We, on the contrary," LUTHER quickly added, when Melanchthon was silent, "believe and teach that in the Holy Supper Christ's body is truly received and eaten. But how that takes place, or how he is in the bread, we indeed do not know, and moreover, we are *not* to know it. But we are to believe the word of God, without prescribing mode or measure unto him. *The bread we see with our eyes, but with our ears we hear that the body is present.*"

"And the fanatics endeavor to prove their doctrine from Scripture?" asked the physician. "Is it to be found there?"

"Now see, dear Doctor Augustine," answered LUTHER, with a bitter smile; "to a fanatic everything in the way of interpretation is possible. *They* know how to handle Scripture, as I shall show you by giving an instance. Moses, you know, writes: '*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;*' but this does not suit *my* view in the least, and I prefer rather to believe with Aristotle, and Pliny, and other heathen, that the world existed from all eternity. Now Moses must

adapt his words to *my* view, thus: *God* is the equivalent of *cuckoo; created* means *devoured;* the *heavens and the earth* are *hedge-sparrows,* feathers and all. Now, according to *my* text (that is, LUTHER's), Moses must speak thus: 'In the beginning the cuckoo devoured the hedge-sparrows, feathers and all;' and it then of course would not read: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' Now, dear Augustine, am I not a master of a thousand arts? This art of interpreting the Scripture to suit one's self is a wonderful art."

"But I suppose their intention is not so bad," objected Melanchthon, in a mild tone, inasmuch as LUTHER had spoken the last words of his remarks with great severity.

"I am very willing to believe it," answered LUTHER, in a milder tone. "God knows that I do not wish to harm Zwingli by such coarse comparisons, nor Œcolampadius especially, whom God has endowed with many choice gifts. And I am heartily sorry for the man. I do not mean them in my utterances; but only the vain, mocking devil who has deceived and led them astray, for he shall and must succumb to the word of God. Let them show us, if they can, a Bible wherein it is written: 'This *signifies* my body, or this is the *sign of my body;* and not as clear as sunlight: 'This *is* my body.'"

"Then Œcolampadius is less anti-biblical than Zwingli?" asked Schurff.

"Be not deceived," answered LUTHER. "Both are of one mind, although they use different terms. For Zwingli's expression, 'This signifies my body,' is

equivalent to that of Œcolampadius: 'This is the sign of my body.' It is immaterial whether I say laughter signifies joy, or laughter is a sign of joy. All I ask is that Zwingli prove from Scripture that *is* is equivalent to *signifies*, and that *body* is equivalent to *sign* of the body; if they fail in this then the words: '*This is my body*,' stand firm as a rock."

"And this rock will stand forever," exclaimed Jonas.

"And this rock will dash them to pieces!—them, and *all* who attempt to abase the glory of the Lord Jesus," continued LUTHER. "Others wish to be still wiser than these two gentry, and torture the text thus: 'My body given for you is *this*.' The latter indeed allow body to be body, but they are nevertheless of one faith with the two former. Others again crucify the loving words thus: 'Take, eat; that which is given for you is my body!' Still others torture the text in this manner: 'Take, eat; this is the remembrance of my body, which is given for you.' And this six-headed faction has now been joined by the seventh head, which says: 'This is no article of faith, hence no one is to interpret it, or engage in controversy about it, and every one may believe what he pleases concerning it, without let or hindrance.' These tramp it under foot altogether. There is nothing left now of the words: 'This is my body,' to be tortured and crucified, but the word *my*. In regard to this word I myself, MARTIN LUTHER, will now prove my ability in the art of fanaticism."

"How will you do that?" asked Jonas, smiling.

"O, that is easily done," answered LUTHER, with a sarcastic smile. "When I say: that is my knife, my

coat, I do not wish to say by this, that I have made the knife or the coat, but I call it mine because I am using it. So Christ calls the bread his body, not because he wishes the bread to be his body, but because he uses his body according to his will; and thus the body has nothing to do with the bread, and the whole is a mere parable. Now, Doctor Jonas, can not the doughty Knight Martin jump about and make a breeze like a good fanatic?"

"May God keep you, doctor, from such fanaticism," said Jonas in his intimate way. "If this should spread abroad, you would not be in want of disciples, if they could only get a chance to degrade the sacrament."

"What think you, dear friends," said LUTHER. of a sudden, "the fanatics have heated my head considerably. Down in the garden there stands my old friend, the apple-tree, under which I was fond of sitting, when I still wore the monk's cowl and was obliged to do battle against flesh and blood, the world and the devil, out of the holy Scriptures. Do you not think, Doctor Augustine, that the fresh air would do me good?"

"Since you have a desire for it, certainly," answered the physician.

"Then come, my good friends," continued LUTHER, rising. "I see now, that the time has come for me to write an article against the sacramentarians, showing that the words: *This is my body*, still stand firm, much as they have tugged at them."

His friends cheerfully followed him into the garden.

CHAPTER XIII.

"*THIS IS MY BODY.*"

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John xx. 29.

AS LUTHER was descending into the convent-garden with his friends, Bugenhagen stepped through the door.

"You come at the right time, Doctor Pommer," was LUTHER'S greeting as he took him by the hand. "You too can help to contend against the fanatics. Tell us, dear parson, did you not at one time call on Zwingli in writing to show how in the holy supper *to be* is *to signify*. And what reply did he make?"

"He said a great deal in reply," rejoined Bugenhagen, "only not the right thing; first he made a great lament about his great sufferings and manifold bodily ills; then he answered my question as though it were a side-issue, and then endeavored to cite some other passages of Scripture, where a like explanation could be made; for instance, when Paul says to the Corinthians: '*The rock was Christ*,' and Moses: '*Eat, it is the Lord's passover*,' then the meaning is, the '*rock*' *signified* Christ, and '*it*' *signifies* the Lord's passover."

"The fool," exclaimed LUTHER, laughing outright. "Zwingli wishes to prove an uncertainty by an uncertainty, and because *he* wills it so, he must force his will on Paul and Moses. You can not even teach school-boys such sieve-like arguments."

The five friends had in the meantime reached the garden and seated themselves on benches beneath the apple-tree, under which LUTHER had more than fifteen years before passed through such mighty spiritual conflicts.

"Just observe those careless little creatures, the sparrows," exclaimed LUTHER, with a smile on his face as he looked at the flower-beds, which he faithfully tended with his own hand. "In the morning when I awake, these sparrows are the first to bid me good-morning through my chamber window; at the same time they devour my plants; and at eve they are the very last to seek the repose of night. I believe that the King of France with all his money could not pay for what these same sparrows eat up in a year, to say nothing of the other birds. Are we not thoughtless and ungrateful? Without the will of God not one of these worthless sparrows falls to the ground; the Lord feeds them all; how great God's care for us must be, when he provides such happiness for these little birds all the year round!"

"Yes, the goodness and omnipotence of God is not to be measured," said the physician.

"And you may add that it is unsearchable and unspeakable," continued LUTHER. "Have I not recently experienced this! Falling into conversation with a peasant, who repeated his creed to me, saying: 'I believe in God, the Father Almighty.' 'My friend,' I said, 'do tell me what *almighty* means.' 'I do not know that,' said the peasant. And verily, the peasant knows precisely as much as *I* do. Before that I had tried to say great things about the omnipotence of God, but

the peasant had rebuked my temerity. If I knew what the omnipotence of God is, I would be almighty myself. How shall I, a poor mortal, measure all that the omnipotence of God is able to accomplish? And we are not likely to search it out as long as we move along in the light of reason and grace. Should we ever reach the light of glory, then we shall see clearly and perfectly, and understand what we here at times lay hold on by faith, or only begin to learn in very small degrees. Ah! it is good to be here," LUTHER continued, as he inhaled the cooling air of evening in full breaths. "I believe that the devil can not bear this place and does not trust to come here; for many days and weeks I have not felt so buoyant and active in spirit as I do now. But, methinks, it is not likely to last."

"Only be of good courage," said the physician, assuringly. "Have I not told you already, Doctor, that the heavenly Physician can cure your sickness better than the earthly one can; and bear in mind that you are surely called to wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Saying this he glanced knowingly at Melanchthon, who understood the signal and said: "The sacramentarians also pretend to wield the sword of the Spirit, and maintain that Scripture would contradict itself, if we were not to believe that there is naught else in the supper than simple bread and wine."

"What Scripture?" asked LUTHER, firing up at once."

"Well," continued Melanchthon, "they say that Scripture states that Christ ascended to heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God in His glory; but if the

body and blood of Christ is in the Holy Supper, He cannot be seated at the right hand of God."

"O, thou foolish man," exclaimed LUTHER, with intense feeling, "that means nothing more than that faith is to believe *no more* and *no further* than the eyes reach and reason can measure. Who will deny that God in His omnipotence has power to cause a body to be in heaven and in the Holy Supper at one and the same time? If the sacramentarians use the goddess of Reason as their weapon, *I* on the contrary will use the Holy Spirit in the Word as mine in the conflict. It is written in the fourth chapter of Romans: '*What God had promised, He also was able to perform*,' and Luke says, '*With God nothing shall be impossible.*' This is *my* Scripture and the grounds of *my* faith. God *says*, 'This is my body;' therefore *He* can truly make it so, and He *does*. Let the sacramentarians first prove that God *cannot* effect it; then we will side with them, but no sooner. Scripture does not contradict itself, but Scripture and their reason are opposed to each other. The wonderful truth of Œcolampadius is this: 'Man's conceit and unbelief combined is to have greater authority than God's word, and it is to be the foundation of our faith.'"

"If we go to the root of the matter, the same holds good of Carlstadt and Zwingli also," remarked Bugenhagen.

"Certainly," continued LUTHER earnestly; "I will expose the real feeling which drives them into this error, and will wager on it my body and soul, which I assure you I would not like to lose. For I, sinner that I am, have some little knowledge of the Spirit, and

I also know a good deal about poor humanity. Their argument is this: *that it is beyond all measure foolish* IN THE LIGHT OF REASON *to believe that we are to eat and drink the body and blood of Christ orally in the Holy Supper.* They would indeed like to conceal this, for they are ashamed to acknowledge it, well knowing that it amounts to nothing; but they are pleased to see the rabble blurt it out. In fine: *It is the spite and disgust of the natural Reason, which does not want this article of faith, and which hates it.* And you will see, dear friends, that these fanatics by their course are only paving the way for a speedy denial of Christ, of God, and of everything, as they are in part already beginning not to believe anything at all."

"They will of course not concede that," said Justus Jonas. "They know right well, that they gain disciples, if they prop up their opinions with the authority of Scripture. A weak, simple mind is easily influenced, if you make such a statement as this: Inasmuch as Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, he can not at the same time be in the Holy Supper."

"These fanatics are as visionary as little children," rejoined LUTHER, with a half smile. "The right hand of God, where Christ is seated, to them is like the heaven which children imagine, in which there stands a golden throne and Christ sits beside the Father with a golden crown on his head. The poor people take the right hand of God to be a place in heaven, and do not know that the right hand of God is nothing else than the almighty power of God, which at the same time can be nowhere and yet must be everywhere."

"Nowhere at the same time?" asked the physician, wonderingly.

"Certainly, my dear Augustine," replied LUTHER, kindly. "For if the almighty power of God were in any particular place, as a man's for instance, then it must be included and secluded there; since everything which is in a specific place is surrounded and measured by that place so that it can not be in any other place at the same time. The divine power may not and can not be thus surrounded and measured; for it can not be included in any space, it is *immeasurable*, it is *outside of all things* and *above all things* actual and possible. And yet the divine power in its essence must be present in all places, even in the smallest leaf; since it is God, who creates, effects and sustains all things by his almighty power and right hand, as we confess in our creed. For God sends out no officers or angels, when he creates or preserves anything, but all this is his own work, the work of his divine power, that is, of his right hand. This is expressed in the words of Scripture: 'Thy right hand upholdeth me.' Or, 'Him hath God exalted with his *right hand*,' or '*Thy right hand*, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. Thou stretchest out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.' Hence the right hand of God is everywhere present. And thus the Bible speaks of God's power, arm, hand, being, countenance, goodness, wisdom, etc. Yet all these are one, for, creation excepted, there is nothing but the one sole Godhead itself. And knowing as we do that *in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, as St. Paul testifies, Colossians ii., and as the Lord himself says: 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. I am in the Father and the

Father in me, and I and the Father are *one*," does it not follow that the Godhead in Christ, *i. e.*, the almighty power of God or his right hand, is essentially, personally present on earth in so many places and yet at the same time in heaven, *i. e.*, with the Father, and that he is *everywhere* and essentially and personally fills heaven and earth and everything with his own nature and majesty. And is he who is in the leaf of this apple-tree not to be in the Holy Supper, when we have his own express word for it?"

"They do not lay hold on it by faith," said Dr. Schurff; "that is why they can not comprehend it; I have only now obtained a clear insight into this glorious mystery."

"You may add, dear Augustine," continued LUTHER cordially, "that we poor sinners are by no means *so mad* as to believe that Christ's body is in the bread, in a *coarse, visible* manner, as bread is in a basket, or wine in a cup, as the fanatics are fond of charging, to tickle their vanity at the expense of our folly; but we simply believe that *Christ's body is present* according to his word and promise: *This is my body.* If others prefer to say: Christ is in the bread, or, Christ is the bread, or Christ is there, where the bread is, or however they wish—be it so. We will not contend about words, if only the sense is held, namely this: that it is not merely natural bread, which we eat in the Holy Supper, but the *body of Christ.*"

Melanchthon, who had followed these words of LUTHER with the greatest attention, now broke the silence with an objection: "The sacramentarians wish to prop up their cause with another argument. Œco-

lampadius, in his tract against Pirkheimer, says that the *glory of Christ* urges him to deny the bodily presence of Christ in the Holy Supper; for he must be a pretty king of glory, who would permit his body to be tossed back and forth on the altar by godless men and unworthy priests. It brings no honor to Christ, so he says, to believe that Christ is in the Holy Supper, but rather shame."

"That sounds," said LUTHER ironically, "as if one of Muenzer's saints were talking. According to this, the honor of Christ, that he is at the right hand of God would be to sit on a clean cushion and let the dear angels sing and play for him, without troubling himself about the Holy Supper. No, my dear Philip, Christ's glory is rather to confound the learned and sagacious fanatics, and to permit them to take offense and harden themselves. As Paul says to the Corinthians, 'Has not God confounded the wisdom of the world?' But to make wisdom foolish and to confound it, is no mean honor. I would not feel inclined to believe it, if it were not really so, that the poor fanatics with their foolish trivialities desire to confound this glorious article of our faith, *all the works of God are honorable and laudable and beautiful;* but not everyone knows how to recognize the beauty, for it is spiritual."

"I have," now observed Bugenhagen, "looked upon all these arguments as blows against the air; but they cite one which certainly seems to have something in it. They say: 'If Christ's body is in heaven and in the Holy Supper at the same time, it is certainly a great miracle; why do the evangelists and apostles not laud

it as something miraculous, as they do in the case of other miracles?"

"Yes indeed," answered LUTHER, quickly, his countenance flushed with holy indignation, "he that has no lime builds his wall with mud. Perhaps the apostles were so poor that they could not raise dye-wood enough to paint a hand with outstretched finger in the margin of their manuscript, and to write alongside of it: '*Here you will find a miracle recorded!*' And since this is not put down beside it, it is no miracle. When the Lord Jesus says: 'This is my body!' and does not add: 'This is a great miracle,' then it amounts to nothing. These interpreters ought to be ashamed of such talk down into the very depths of their miserable souls! *Christ's word and work are altogether miraculous; therefore, his name is called* WONDERFUL. Now, my good friends," continued LUTHER, earnestly, "all these arguments are, as Doctor Pommer has said, blows against the air; but the fanatics have *one* argument, which I regard as the strongest, and which they mean seriously; and I believe that it is true, namely: 'This article, they say, is burdensome to men; for it *is hard to believe* that a body is in heaven and in the Holy Supper at the same time.' There we have the source of the difficulty. But when a matter is hard to believe, let not him who finds it thus, say, *it is not true.* This one argument alone would have sufficed to prove of which spirit they are the offspring. It is indeed hard, yea impossible, for the children of this world *to believe;* to the *saints* alone, as Scripture calls them—that is, to faithful Christian minds—it is not only an easy matter, but a *delight* and a *joy*—yea,

life and salvation, to believe *all the words* and *works of God*."

"Another argument which they use belongs to the same class," said Justus Jonas. "Since the apostles themselves showed the sacrament no honor and did not worship it, but ate it like other food, it is proved that they themselves did not believe that Christ's body is present."

"That is bad indeed," rejoined LUTHER, smiling. "Mary and Joseph did not worship Christ, when he was born; that proves by their logic that Christ did not come into the world, and that the child which was born of Mary was without life. The dear fanatics measure the *hearts of the apostles* by their *own hearts*. I can easily bear to have the devil revile us with such low expressions; for I judge that he is mocking himself more than us."

"Do not forget," said Bugenhagen, "that they add to this that the works and miracles of Christ were *visible;* that he, for instance, made wine of water, restored the blind, made the deaf to hear and the like; and since the *miracle* in the Holy Supper is not *visible* —therefore Christ's body is not present." LUTHER quickly interrupted him.

"Put on your patches, my fine fellows, put on your patches. The robe indeed is *good*, but the skin and the hair are *worthless*. I only wonder that they do not endeavor to prove in this way that Christ does not sit at the right hand of God. That too is one of the greatest miracles of God and yet can not be seen with bodily eyes. If you were to bring me the books containing such things, without title or author, and I did

not know that such excellent, learned men as Zwingli and Œcolampadius were the authors, I would surely take them to be the work of some heathen, written to mock us Christians. It is hardly possible that such shallow talk should seriously move a rational man, even if he were a Turk or a Jew, to say nothing of a Christian."

"Œcolampadius makes one powerful assault on our cause," now observed Melanchthon. "The Lord himself, this is the statement, says in the sixth chapter of St. John's gospel: 'The flesh profiteth nothing;' now, even if Christ gave us his body and blood to partake of in the Lord's Supper; it would be of no use unto salvation. Œcolampadius boasts that this argument is his iron wall."

"And yet it is only paper, painted the color of iron," responded LUTHER more calmly. "Let Œcolampadius prove, in the first place, that in the passage cited Christ meant *His* flesh in the Holy Supper by the words, the flesh. The text referred to reads as follows: '*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing:* the words that I speak unto you are spirit *and life.*' Does the Lord here say: *My* flesh profiteth nothing?' Does he not rather say, just before in the same connection, where he is really speaking of *his* flesh in the Holy Supper; '*my* flesh is meat indeed?' And, 'Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life.' Must not the blind see, that Christ in the passage, out of which Œcolampadius would build his iron wall, by flesh means all that is in the flesh, namely, man's carnal disposition, reason, will, word and work? All that certainly profits nothing unto salvation. You see, dear

friends, there is no Jericho-trumpet needed to blow down the iron wall of Œcolampadius. The single word *my*, which is not found there, blows the iron wall down. Bees like these were buzzing about Zwingli's head, when he wrote against Dr. Eck: 'If Christ's flesh be eaten, it will result in nothing but flesh, for all that is born of the flesh is flesh.' The poor simpleton, who knows no other bread than that which is baked in the oven! There you have Œcolampadius' wall. It caves in and buries him with all his wisdom. And yet there stands an iron wall, which is called: '*This is my body*,' and *this* will stand forever."

"They will of course object," observed Melanchthon, "that they do not mean to say that Christ's flesh is absolutely of no use, but only when it is bodily eaten."

"But, my Philip," answered LUTHER, "if I eat the flesh of Christ in the Holy Supper *bodily*, do I not at the same time eat it *spiritually?* If I believe *in my heart* that Christ's body is present, *given for me for the remission of sins*, is not that a *real spiritual eating?* Do we not teach distinctly and clearly enough that to him who merely partakes of the sacrament bodily, without such spiritual eating, it is not only unprofitable, but even injurious, as St. Paul says: 'Whosoever shall eat this bread unworthily, shall be guilty of the body of the Lord.' Œcolampadius opprobriously calls us Capernaites, whereby he wishes to say: 'Eaters of human flesh,' because we eat the flesh of Christ bodily in the Lord's Supper. The poor man does not know that he, with all his fanatical followers, is the real Capernaite; for just as the Capernaites, as

we read in John vi., separated the work from the word, and directed their minds to the *bodily eating*, so do our fanatics, who separate the words, and let those go in which the spiritual eating is treated of, and at the same time wonder and stare at the bodily eating. *Just so did the Capernaites;* but other objections of theirs, such as when they adduce, Matthew xxiv., 'Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not; or when they say, If the bread is Christ's body, then the bread also is crucified for us;' in like manner, when they ask, '*where* Christ has commanded to eat his body in the Holy Supper,'—all these objections and questions, which Dr. Carlstadt especially has brought forth against me, are too clearly shreds, with which they adorn and patch themselves up in a beggarly way, and yet can nowhere cover or warm their evil consciences."

"They of course do not admit that," remarked Bugenhagen. "Nay, rather Œcolampadius expresses sympathy for us, and laments that if the body of Christ were *really* in the bread, then we must be so much concerned and so much occupied with the miracle, as to how Christ's body became bread, that we would forget the *remembrance* of him, which he enjoins so earnestly. It would therefore be better that there were nothing of it, than that we should have such profitless concern."

"Verily, this is a dangerous business!" exclaimed LUTHER, laughing. "I wonder whether the learned gentleman will not trouble himself concerning the way in which a cow gets through a door, notwithstanding she has a tail. Tell me now, gentlemen, has Christ com-

manded us to search out how his body is in the bread? Is is not just as great a wonder, how God may become man? Does not God here again make foolish the wisdom of this world? Is not this precisely as when the same Œcolampadius asks us, for the purpose of mocking us: If Christ's body were in the Holy Supper, is not then the bread more honorable than the body of the Virgin? Yea, verily, a heathen does not put such questions as this Christian. You see, dear sirs, the great defect of these fanatics is, that they do not, as St. Paul requires, *discern the body of Christ* over against other flesh, and only speak of it as if Christ's body were *perishable, digestible flesh,* which may be bought of the butchers and cooked in the kitchen; and impose on us a God of flesh. Yes, they are so coarse in their clumsiness, that they do not see that the flesh of Christ in the Holy Supper is *imperishable, immortal, incorruptible flesh,* as we read in the psalm concerning Christ: '*Thou wilt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption.*' There is, if I may so speak, a God-flesh, a spirit-flesh; it is in God and God in it; hence it is *living flesh* and gives *life* to *all* who eat it, to the *body* and to the *soul.*"

Melanchthon had been listening with the utmost attention, and for a time sat absorbed in deep thought, profound silence pervading the whole group, and a light, gentle breeze moving the dense branches of the old apple tree. "Yes," he said at length, almost as though speaking to himself, "Œcolampadius blasphemes when he asks: 'Of what profit or necessity is it for Christ's body to be in the bread?' and when he declares our articles void unless we can answer him this question."

"My Philip," rejoined LUTHER, with evident pain in

his tone of voice, "these inquirers have no other object in view than to confound our faith. Let us see how a pious, God-fearing heart deports itself when it believes the word of God.

"In the first place it asks whether it is the Word of God, and if it is the Word of God, then it suppresses with hand and foot the question of use and necessity. For with fear and humility it says: Thou dear Lord, I am blind; I do not know what is profitable or necessary for me, nor do I wish to know it; but I believe and trust thee, that thou knowest and meanest what is best for me, according to thy divine goodness and truth. I am content and glad simply to hear thy word and know thy will."

"But could not an answer be given to Œcolampadius in reply to his blasphemous questions?" inquired the physician.

"O certainly, my dear Doctor Schurff," answered LUTHER, calmly, notwithstanding his excitement. "I will give him an answer, and here it is. Shrewd, conceited minds, with their *reason* are offended by these words and fall in consequence, and never enjoy the Holy Supper of Christ. For Christ is appointed for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. And it is certainly proper that the proud, wicked blasphemers are so separated that they can not partake of the holy sacrament. For if they believe that there is simply bread and wine in the Holy Supper, then they receive nothing but bread and wine, and *neither spiritually nor bodily partake of the body of the Lord.* It is very right that our possession be not scattered among the unworthy, but be preserved holy and pure among the

humble alone. Again, if our bodies are nourished by the body of Christ, then our faith and our hope abide through it, so *that our bodies too shall live forever by this same eternal food of the body of Christ*, of which they partake bodily. For Christ shall render our vile bodies eternal, living, blessed and glorious, which is a much greater thing than his giving us his body to eat on earth for a short time. For this reason he says in the sixth chapter of John: '*He that eateth my flesh, dwelleth in me and I in him.*' For Christ's body, which we eat in the Holy Supper, is not digested or changed, but rather itself unceasingly changes the soul into righteousness, the body into immortality."

"Thanks, thanks, a thousand thanks, reverend sir, for these words of yours," exclaimed the physician, grasping LUTHER'S hand and pressing it to his heart. "Ah, if I could only tell you how they refresh me, and lift me up into the high and holy presence of my God and Lord! *Now* I am beginning to comprehend, how it is that death no longer has a sting for the Christian. How wonderfully gracious the Lord is to us poor mortals."

Melanchthon, too, looked at his mighty fellow-soldier with a glance of gratitude, and although his lips were closed, yet one could see that he was greatly moved. Bugenhagen and Jonas sat with folded hands and bowed heads. They shared the emotions of the physician.

Luther alone seemed unmoved. He resembled the vine, which distributes its grapes to the hungry, whether they render thanks or not. At last he said:

"Listen further. In the Holy Supper we have the

word of God, to wit: '*This is my body, which is given for you; this is my blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins.*' The sacramentarians will grant, I doubt not, that we, with our doctrine of the Holy Supper, are fully and wholly planted on the word of God. And now I ask: Is God's word purposeless? Do we not read in Isaiah: 'God's word shall not return void, but it shall accomplish what He pleases.' Why does Paul say to the Romans: 'It is the power of God unto salvation *to every one that believeth?*' Why does he call it: 'The word of life, the word of salvation, the word of wisdom,' and so forth. Are life, grace, salvation, wisdom, strength, power, all *nothing?* What else? God's word, which we also have in the Holy Supper, brings untold profit. It produces and strengthens faith; it overcomes sin, the devil, death and hell, and all evil; it makes us obedient to God, yea, enables us to become children and heirs of God; it praises God; it causes all the angels to rejoice, and refreshes every creature. All this must be in the Holy Supper, because God's word is in it; but since the fanatics separate the outward element from God's word, they, of course, are without all this benefit, for the *outward element without the word of God is of no profit.*"

"How will Œcolampadius stand in the face of this?" exclaimed Jonas. "All this must be so, and there is naught but full, holy harmony in the entire word of God. You have, dear doctor, given us excellent and glorious proof of the force of the body of Christ in the Holy Supper; but Œcolampadius further asks *why it is necessary* to receive the body of Christ in the Eucharist? Will you not also reply to this question?"

"That can be done in a few words," said LUTHER. "First it is necessary for *God's sake;* for if it were not so, then Christ in his word were a liar. God is true. He will certainly perform what he promises. In the next place, it is necessary for the *sake of our faith;* for faith in God's word is a necessity on our part, since it is spoken for this very purpose, *that we are to believe it;* and God *demands our faith, when he has given his word.* Now God's word is there recorded, which comprehends the body of Christ and states that it is present; but as the word and faith are necessary, so also do we need the body comprehended in the word, in order that our faith may be right and in unison with the word. The word and the body are not to be separated; and even if without the word it would still be necessary, because life and salvation are in it."

Here again there was a pause, LUTHER giving manifest signs of physical exhaustion; then he arose and said: "Let us walk around in the garden a little longer; there is a cool breeze stirring. Then we will all go in."

"I have still one request to make of you, dear doctor," said Melanchthon. "What you have spoken to us to-day, you will doubtless feel impelled to preach from the house-tops, and you will publish a tract against the sacramentarians. Will you not?"

"It will indeed be necessary," responded LUTHER, "Much as I fear that my bodily infirmities will often be in the way. But it shall and must be done. Muenzer is dead, but his spirit is not yet rooted out, and is almost the same spirit, which in other language speaks out of the rebellious peasants and the fanatics—although I am of the opinion that the preachers, against

whom I speak and write, have no evil object in view. But, more's the pity, the evil spirit has blinded and taken possession of them, therefore they are not to be trusted."

Then LUTHER turned to the physician and said: "Dear Doctor Augustine, I have felt like a new-born child during these hours spent in your company. But I know that this will not last. For the last eight days I have not enjoyed an hour of sleep."

"And yet the Lord has thus far sustained you," answered Schurff in the glad tones of good courage.

"That reaches the heart," said LUTHER in a voice of emotion, as he reached out his hand to the physician. "You are right: how shall I preach to others, if I be myself a castaway? The Lord of all good will not leave nor forsake me, a poor worm."

Here he took leave of his friends and went back to his chamber.

CHAPTER XIV.

CATHARINE ASKS FORGIVENESS.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Ps. li. 17.

A WARM, mild evening had descended upon Wittenberg, and the oppressive heat of the day was followed by a cool air which was by contrast very refreshing. The moon went on her silent journey along the dark-blue sky, inviting the citizens to long and late walks.

Behind Kranach's house there was a little garden, half-hedged in with green, out of which a gate led to the cathedral square. Leaning against the rear wall of the dwelling there stood an arbor of blossoming jessamines, which filled the whole garden with fragrance. Much as all this could cheer the eye and heart of every simple and contented mind, yet the most of it was lost on one who, except in one respect, could hardly be surpassed in simplicity and contentment.

We refer to Margaret, the blind girl, who was sitting in the arbor with the ten-year-old Ursula Kranach at her side, who, partly from special affection for Margaret, partly from the delight she took in the loveliness of nature, had on this evening coaxed her mother to permit her to remain up an hour later than usual. Her little sisters, Barbara and Anna, had long been rehearsing their childish plays in the sweet dreams of refreshing sleep.

"Margaret," said the girl, as she pointed towards the moon, "father has told me that the moon is a silver boat, which rides through the sky. How I would like to ride in it! Wouldn't you?"

"Your father was only speaking in a figure," answered the blind girl, "and there may be some resemblance, although I know nothing about either. But if the moon were really a little boat in the sky, I would only then like to ride along, if I knew where the boat was going."

"I can tell you that it goes to our dear God," answered Ursula, promptly. "Father said there were none but angels in it, who had to look around and see how things were faring on the earth, and whether the children were sleeping soundly."

"Well, Ursula," rejoined the blind girl, smiling, "what will the angels say now, when they find that you are not even in bed?"

"They only look after little children, like Anna and Barbara," replied the girl; "and then I always think there may be among them a blind angel, like yourself, and that one can't see me."

"Not so, my child," answered Margaret, seriously. "When God sends out his angels to see how things are going on in the world, they cannot be blind; and even if the angel were blind, the eye of God would see everything. God sees into your heart, too, and knows what you are thinking about."

Meanwhile a servant girl came up, who was sent by the lady of the house to take little Ursula to her bedroom. But the little girl resisted, and wanted to stay longer in the garden at Margaret's side.

"Do you find it so hard to obey your dear mother?" asked the blind girl.

"But I am not sleepy yet," replied the little one willfully; then she added, more submissively, "I will go, because mother wishes it; but dear Margaret, don't you know another song? Just one more, do; then I will go at once."

"No cheerful obedience yet," exclaimed Margaret. "However, so that you may go to sleep, and soon, I will give you a little song to take with you on the way. Now pray listen:

"My heart is so small,
One only can enter,—
The great Lord of all.
There Jesus shall live,
Christ now I receive,
And sleep in the name
Of the true God. Amen."

When Ursula had repeated the verse and committed it to memory, she embraced her blind teacher, kissed her, and said: "But I may have you, dear Margaret, and my dear parents and sisters, in my heart too? I love you so dearly."

"Certainly, dear child," responded the blind girl. "You must not take it to mean that you are to love no one but the Lord. The meaning of this verse is only that you must love Christ, who is the children's Saviour too, more than you love all others. The more you love Christ, the more faithfully and heartily will you love your parents and sisters and everybody."

"Then I am to love Christ more than God?" asked Ursula.

"My child," answered Margaret solemnly, "if you love Christ, then you love God. No one can love the Father except in the Son."

Little Ursula appeared outwardly satisfied, although she could not grasp the truth contained in these words. "You must tell me that again to-morrow," she said to the blind girl, and then went back into the house with the servant. Turning to Margaret, the latter asked: "Shall I come back for you, Miss?"

"No," she replied, "I can find the way alone. But if Master Kranach and Madam Magdalene inquire for me, or do not wish to have me stay a little longer, you may come back and let me know."

So Margaret remained alone in the arbor, the light of the moon shedding its mild radiance around her, although she herself was, as ever, veiled in deep night.

"How happy I am to-day!" she said to herself. "It is an entirely different happiness, which fills my heart, one to which I was formerly an utter stranger. Even the grief which until now made me sad, my father's and sister's anger and dislike which I feel, the bitter lot of exile from my father's house, the harsh words I was forced to hear from them, and the pity I received from others on account of my blindness, and which pained me although it was intended to comfort me—all, all is light to-day, and resolves itself into joy and peace in God. And why do so few people understand what it is that makes me so happy? Is my heart different from theirs? Am I a child with childish thoughts, which they can only laugh at? Ah, Lord, if my heart and feelings must be changed as I grow older, then let me rather remain a child, or as a child enter into thy kingdom!"

She then became absorbed in deep thought, and bent her head down upon her breast. But suddenly she raised it, and half singing, half reciting, she spoke:

"Ye call me blind, good neighbors,
And pitying say to me:
'Poor maid! life hath but sorrow
And sadness brought to thee!"

"'Thou canst not gaze on heaven,
Seest not one beaming star;
Bright blossoms, flowing streamlets,
From thee all hidden are.

"'Seest not the look of pity,
Of tender love and faith:
Ah, life for thee hath only
The bitterness of death.'

"Ye gaze with kind compassion,
Your hearts with sorrow warm,
As though both God in heaven,
And man, had worked me harm.

"But ye are blind, good neghbors,
Come, heart and mind behold,
And view my vast possessions,
Of joy and wealth untold.

"Yes, I can look to heaven,
'Tis in my heart enshrined;
E'en here on earth I enter,
And choicest blessings find.

"Thro' faith in God my Saviour,
This heaven I behold,
His love and true compassion,
Are stars of purest gold.

"Joy, gratitude, wake in me
A bright and glorious Spring;
And my whole heart inclineth,
My Maker's praise to sing.

"A clear, pure fount o'erfloweth,
In God's most holy Word:
Each ripple serves to strengthen
My faith in Christ my Lord.

"Though all without is darkness,
My *heart* need not be blind,
A Father's eye beholds me,
He to his child is kind.

"When I, thro' His great mercy,
Eternal life attain,
I then shall see the glory
Of my Redeemer's reign."

Whilst Margaret was reciting these verses, she had now and then been interrupted for a few moments at a time by a crackling sound, as of branches pressed under foot; but now the noise increased, and light footsteps on the grass struck her ear. Springing up from her seat in fright, she bent her head forward, listening intently, and with beating heart awaited the result of the disturbance. But all again became quiet.

"Ah!" she said to herself. "What can that be? It is no bird concealing itself in the branches; it is surely not the tramp of an animal; it must be the step of a human being. Master Lucas, is it you?" she asked with trembling voice; "or you, Madam Magdalene? or" ——. She was about to mention another name, but she did not let it escape her lips.

As she received no reply to her repeated questions, her fear and anxiety increased, and she began, stepping quietly, to feel with her hands her way back to the shelter of the house, when a sound coming from the enclosure of the garden, like a suppressed human sigh, sent a tremor through Margaret's heart.

"That is the voice of some poor unfortunate," she said to herself, affrighted, and stood still. And this conviction not only removed the fear of threatening danger, but gave her courage to render aid so far as she could.

"Who are you?" she called out in the direction whence the sound of lament had reached her ear; "answer, I pray you! I am blind, and do not know who and where you are; but I can go back to the house and procure aid. O answer me," she continued beseechingly, "and do not despise the help of a poor girl." And still there was no answer.

"Now," said Margaret, "help is surely needed." And then she resumed with great care her retreat to the house. The cry of distress again was heard, more distinct than before.

"Heavens!" cried the blind girl. "I know that voice. Catharine, sister, is it you? For the sake of our sainted mother, answer me, dear sister! I am overcome with anxiety for you. Alas, that I can not hasten to you! Have pity on me and come to me."

But all her appeals were in vain, and she began to doubt whether she had correctly distinguished the voice. She knew of no other course than to retrace her steps to the house. Hardly, however, had she proceeded a few steps, when the voice called to her: "Stay, I am coming."

"Then it is you, dear, good Catharine," exclaimed Margaret joyously, and with a relieved heart. "Come into the arbor; I shall try to find my way back thither, if you will not come and lead me. I will follow you wherever you may lead me."

Whilst the blind girl was groping her way back to the arbor, she heard steps coming nearer and nearer, and more unsteady than her own. Suddenly she felt her feet clasped and her progress checked; a head was pressed against her knees, and amid a flood of tears, a broken voice cried: "Margaret, can you forgive me?"

Margaret made no reply; but bending down, lovingly took hold of her sister's arms, raised her up and fell on her bosom.

"Mother," she said, weeping, "mother, are you not glad in heaven at the dear love of your children on earth? Ah, Catharine, I have always loved you, though you would not believe it. How is our poor, poor father?"

"Do not speak of him now," said Catharine, her heart beating fast and loud. "Speak of *me*, Margaret, speak to *me*. Tell me first that you have forgiven me."

"I cannot do that," rejoined Margaret, with emotion. "I have never accused you either before myself or before God. I knew that I was not worthy your love, and when this thought saddened me, it was only in self-accusation. I knew not how to win your love."

"Oh, do not make my littleness seem so small," again begged Catharine. "At one time I excused myself with such false reasoning, but now such words can no longer satisfy me. I know I have despised you. I have not treated you like a dear sister, but like an humble servant-girl. I have not even been conscious of the pain I gave you."

"And why did you do that?" asked Margaret, in heartfelt sympathy.

"Alas! I hardly know why myself," replied Catharine. "As far back as I can remember my childhood's days, it was always the same—you were the servant, and I the mistress; and you bore everything so sweetly and so amiably. You asked for nothing better; you were always so contented and happy. Alas! Margaret, if our dear mother had not died so early, it would not have gone so far. I believe that even true sisterly love must be taught."

"Yes, by the genuine love for God," said Margaret; and then continued affectionately, "This is the one thing, dear sister, that has always pained me, that you would not learn to love God from the heart. Do you feel, Catharine, that no one but God has led you to me?"

"I do not yet understand you," rejoined the sister. "It may be so, but I do not understand it. Ah! I can keep back nothing from you," she proceeded, after a pause, with renewed agitation; "there is, indeed, one who has brought me to you, and it is the young Italian. Margaret, Leonard was the very first to speak a harsh word to me. I hated him bitterly for it, and hated you even more than I had done, when I saw that he loved you more than me. I wished to forget his cutting words, but could not. They were like the blows of a lash, and they tormented me till I came hither to you."

"I know not what Leonard has said to you," remarked Margaret; "but do you think that his intention was unkind?"

"I thought so until yesterday," answered her sister; "but yesterday, when I was bringing poor father his

food, Leonard looked at me with such a kindly and sympathetic smile, and said: 'Catharine, have you ever heard of One *who opens the eyes of the blind, and makes the dumb to speak?*' These words penetrated my heart. I knew that he thought of you and poor father, who all this time has not spoken a word; but yet I felt as if he also meant me as being blind, though I had eyes, and that he wished I should speak to you."

"And with this came the thought of God?" asked Margaret, almost impatient with joy.

"O no, no," answered Catharine, "I thought only of you, sister; all at once I knew that during my whole life I had treated you unkindly; that I only am to blame for father's turning you out. I then had no rest; I spent the whole night in weeping, and every word that Leonard had uttered against me fell upon my heart like molten lead; I thought of nothing, of nobody, but yourself only. You stood before me with your sightless eyes, and these were suddenly opened, as Leonard had said, and your first glance fell on me like a sword-stroke, aiming to cut my soul in twain. And so this glance has troubled me this whole day; ten times, perhaps, did I get up to hasten to you and fall at your feet; I knew where you were, for people had told me. But anxiety and fear always drove me back again, till evening came. Then it was as though a voice was saying, 'The blind one, who is to be restored to sight, is your sister Margaret; but the dumb one, who will not speak, is your own self.' And now a spirit of fear drove me from the house. I was no longer afraid of you, but of Leonard. I fell on my knees and besought the mother of God and all the saints, that Leonard

might not cross my path until I had spoken to you. I could not bear his look. Then I came hither, and went around the house secretly, like a thief, not having the courage to enter, until I came near the garden and heard your voice. O, Margaret, if you forgive me, Leonard will forgive me too."

"Catharine," rejoined the blind girl sadly, "I will acknowledge that you have grieved me and Leonard; but is there not a higher One, whom you have offended, and who alone can forgive you?"

"O, do not take my only comfort from me," begged Catharine. "I know you mean Holy Mother Church; but to-morrow I will go to confession and do penance, and I will fast for a week—for two weeks—and carry my alms to the hospital for the poor. Yes, I will do that and even more; but do not take away my comfort; I think only of you and Leonard. Yes, dear sister, the time has come when the dumb must speak; I must tell you everything. I know that Leonard loves you, and that he loves you more than me, and I will now love him no longer; you alone shall love him, and if you wish, I will tell him myself that he shall love you only. Does that satisfy you, dear Margaret? or shall I do still more penance? Margaret, tell me, shall I enter a convent? I shall indeed spend day and night in weeping; but if you and Leonard wish it, I will go."

When Catharine ceased speaking, from sheer exhaustion, and bedewed Margaret's hand with her tears, the latter said, with heart-felt compassion in her tones:

"My dearly-loved sister, banish such thoughts from your heart; and believe me, you are comforting your-

self with false reasoning. Alas, what shall I do to effect an entrance into your heart? Catharine, you told me that Leonard meant you when he spoke of the dumb; but how would it be, if by the *seeing eye* of the blind, he had not meant me, but *only yourself*."

"No, no," she answered quickly and earnestly. "He meant us both—you and me."

"My poor sister," said Margaret, "could you really hope and believe that my sight would yet be restored? I know that my earthly lot is constant blindness—the darkness of night, until in the night of death and the grave the light will rise for me, and I shall see everything that was before hidden in darkness. This comforts and strengthens me, and makes me contented and happy. Yes, Catharine, my bodily eye will never behold you; but my soul sees you, and beholds the tears in your eyes, and the very words on your lips. You think," she continued impressively, "that Leonard's remark about 'the dumb one' is fulfilled when your mouth speaks to me; but sister, are you not simply saying what your heart dictates to you? Would you not have spoken in this way sooner, if your heart had urged you to do so, as it does to-day?"

"Yes," answered Catharine. "But why did I not speak? Why *could* I not speak? He had not yet wounded my soul with the arrows of his words; he had not yet tormented me with fear and anguish."

"He?" asked Margaret, shaking her head in painful regret. "Ah, Catharine, if you meant Him, the only One, who can wound and heal with the arrows of his word; who does not cause fear and anxiety, but on the contrary, takes them away! Leonard's language

has touched your soul; but do you imagine that this poor stranger speaks of his own impulse? Tell me, Catharine, do you believe that Leonard is as contented and happy as I?"

"Yes," she replied, "you are both happier than I, for you love each other; but I am hated by every one. All that he says to you and for you, proves that he loves you; for me alone he has no kind word."

"Sister," said Margaret, with deep sadness in her tone, "the reason why your heart and conscience are disturbed is this: You do not know Him, who alone opens the eyes of the blind and makes the dumb to speak. O, if you could understand that the Lord chastens those whom he loves! But you, too, will learn to see and to speak—this is my comfort and my hope. Let us speak of this One very often; no more to-day, but to-morrow, and every day after. Your heart is taken up too much with every-day troubles; but trust me, Catharine, all will yet be well, and we shall be very happy."

"Yes," said her sister, thoughtfully, "I know what you mean to say: you will try to turn toward me his love for you, and give him up to me. Yes, you are good enough to do that; you have always acted so; but I dare not expect such happiness, I dare not accept it from you. And, besides," she added, with a deep sigh, "he will not give you up, you are so much better than I."

When Margaret heard her speak thus, tears came into her eyes. Unable to reply, she drew Catharine to her heart, and embraced her.

"You are weeping?" asked Catharine. "Yes, it is

hard for you to give the best and most beautiful of your possessions to your poor sister."

"No," she answered softly. "I do not weep for myself; I am weeping for you, Catharine, that not a drop of the oil of gladness refreshes your wounded soul. Your hour is not yet come, and your human nature cannot know the things of the spirit of God. Now go to your rest, dear sister," she added, entreatingly, "it must be late."

"I will not go without you," she answered, decidedly. "You must go with me, Margaret."

"Not to-day?" asked the blind girl in surprise.

"Yes, to-day, immediately," continued Catharine earnestly. "You must not remain here any longer. If you will not accompany me, I will not believe that you intend to forgive me."

"Sister," rejoined Margaret solemnly, with both hands uplifted to heaven. "So sure as I believe in my God, so sure is it that my whole heart loves you."

"Well, then prove it to me," was Catharine's earnest plea; "go with me. Will you not help to nurse our sick father?"

"Oh, gladly, gladly!" answered the blind girl; "but do you not know that he has turned me out? Dare I recross his threshold, unless he first takes away the curse which rests on me?"

"He did that in anger," replied the sister, "and now he has forgotten all about it, and if I ask him, he will take back his curse."

Then Margaret grasped her sister's hand, and said seriously and with dignity: "I must venture to refuse, at the risk of having you doubt my love to you, and

of having you think me hard and cruel. But I cannot, I dare not go with you. Had you come sent by father, and were he to send for me even in order to repeat his curse—yes, if he wished to chastise me still more severely with his hand—I would follow you; but for the sake of your own peace, Catharine, I will conceal nothing from you; for the sake of our unhappy father's soul's salvation, I dare not go with you now. It is indeed possible that I may come, even though not invited; but that is in the hand of God alone, and his time and signal I must await. Depart from me in peace, my dear, dear sister. May our souls meet in prayer, and believe me there is no sacrifice on earth which I would not willingly and with a glad heart make in the interests of your *real* welfare."

Catharine reluctantly yielded to her sister's wish and will; yet she felt herself so deeply moved by the heartiness and dignified earnestness of her language, that she was unable to make any further objection. Without a word she held out her hand to the sightless girl, and passing out of the gate, wended her way back to her father's house.

But Margaret laid her folded hands on her bosom and said: "Lord, thou searcher of hearts, who leadest our hearts in the way they should go, lead the blind over an easy road." And she too sought her place of rest.

CHAPTER XV.

PASTOR BUGENHAGEN.

"Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved."—Ps. lxxx.: 3.

THE mysterious sickness, which had now for many weeks held LUTHER in its grasp, and filled him with actual dread of death, was at times for a few hours mitigated by the power of his will. His friends and co-workers, at his physician's suggestion, did everything to drive the evil spirt of melancholy from him by kindly words of cheer, especially by fostering his zeal for the Lord's cause; but all this was often in vain.

As soon as Luther was alone, or when exhausted endeavored to rest, it was as though the evil spirit returned with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, to increase the torment of the great Reformer.

For the past fortnight he had enjoyed hardly one hour of restful and refreshing sleep; he ate and drank so little, that it was almost a miracle how he could sustain life. His face bore the plainest traces of failing energy,, and an indescribably deep despondency was seen in his eyes. Often, when the rushing and roaring in his ears—the hurricane, as he called it—became so violent, that he started as though mountains threatened to fall on him, he sprang up from his seat, as if to escape from the threatening destruction; but hardly had he tottered a step or two, when a violent vertigo seized him and forced him to sit down.

Doctor Augustine Schurff did everything that lay in the medical skill of the times, and LUTHER objected to nothing; but the mysterious ailment mocked at all remedies, and filled poor Madame Catharine with anxious apprehension.

And yet during this trying period, more abundant in suffering than any other in LUTHER'S life, he gave testimony of his divine mission, in exhibiting the power of the Holy Spirit. It was the time, when Zwingli, Œcolampadius, Martin Bucer, and the like-minded Swiss and Alsatian theologians, clearly and distinctly showed by the promulgation of their doctrine of the Holy Supper, that they did not intend in every particular to join in the Reformation begun and continued by LUTHER, and that they, only yielding a half obedience to the word of God, not only intended to mingle natural knowledge with divine revelation, but, even in individual articles of doctrine, to exalt the former above the latter.

The discussions which LUTHER hitherto, although severely tried in body and mind, had held with his friends relative to this article, which subsequently brought about an open rupture between the German and Swiss evangelicals, he now reduced to writing, with power in every word, founded upon the rock of faith, which nothing could shake. To this powerful treatise he gave the title: "These words of Christ, 'This is my body,' still stand unshaken in despite of the fanatics."

In this polemical treatise, which no one can read without admiration and astonishment, in view of the gigantic mental powers of this man of God, victori-

ous and triumphant himself, growing stronger and stronger in faith, and pressing on toward the wondrous light of the gospel, he defeated all human wisdom, which strove to show its authority in the kingdom of God, and opened glimpses into the everlasting glory of the souls redeemed in Christ, which but few are permitted to behold.

Whoever takes up this wonderful book, so incomparably clear in its diction, and is at all inclined to have faith, will find his soul filled with thoughts and emotions which no human wisdom can confound.

"Here I conclude for this time." Thus LUTHER ends this treatise, until a new attack be made. "For the text: 'This is my body,' still stands unshaken, over against all fanaticism. This, God be praised, have I maintained by these writings. God grant that all who differ from me be converted to the truth. If not, then may they be forced to write what shall prove naught but snares with which to trip themselves, so that they fall into my hands. Amen.''

It was on a Saturday, on the sixth of July, when the Rev. John Bugenhagen, pastor of the city church of Wittenberg, was sitting at his desk pretty early in the day, busily engaged on the sermon which he was to preach at the morrow's vesper service.

The clock of the convent church had just struck eight, when a hurried and anxious knock sounded upon his door, which was opened before Bugenhagen could rouse himself from his meditation.

Wolff, the faithful old servant of LUTHER, entered without any greeting, and besought the pastor to come in haste to the doctor at the convent.

"In haste?" exclaimed Bugenhagen, affrighted. "What has happened? Who sends you hither?"

"The doctor himself," answered Wolff, adding sadly, "May God ward off danger and harm, but it seems to me that it is a bad business. And the doctor's poor wife, Mistress Catharine, is frightened almost to death, and there was no end to her trouble and anxiety, when expressions fell from the doctor's lips awhile ago, like those spoken by one possessed of the evil spirit; and she earnestly requests you, reverend pastor, to come at once, and be sure to see her before you see the doctor himself."

Before Wolff had finished his message, Bugenhagen had prepared himself for the walk by donning his clerical attire, without which he never went abroad. Very soon the short distance to the convent was traversed, and Bugenhagen went, as he had been requested, directly into the presence of Mistress Luther. It took him greatly by surprise to see LUTHER standing by the side of his wife, as though in ordinary conversation. Even a keenly critical eye could discover nothing peculiar in LUTHER'S look and gestures; and only the matron showed plainly how anxiously she was troubled about her husband.

LUTHER advanced a few steps to meet his friend on entering, extended his hand, and said: "I thank you, dear Doctor Pommer, for complying with my request so readily."

"How could I do otherwise?" rejoined Bugenhagen, with hearty familiarity. "But, may I ask you, why have you sent for me?"

"Not on account of any evil design," answered

LUTHER, with a forced smile. "I need you, and have much to say to you. If it is agreeable to you, please go with me into my bed-room."

Before Bugenhagen could reply, LUTHER stepped up to his wife, and kissing her, said: "Be calm, dear Katy. The hand of the Lord can change all things. Will you from you heart forgive all I have done to grieve you?"

Madame Catharine was so deeply moved that she could not answer, but fell on her husband's breast weeping. LUTHER gently freed himself, and walked out of the door hastily, although with tottering gait. Bugenhagen wished to follow immediately, but the distressed wife quietly motioned to him to delay for a few moments.

"I wish only to tell you, reverend sir, what has happened." She then began in broken accents: "About an hour ago my dear husband experienced a violent and terrible attack, more severe than I ever before observed during his long illness, so that I thought his end was at hand. When he had obtained some slight relief, he told me that if the hand of God should be laid upon him so sharply again, he could not bear it, and our Lord Jesus Christ would then probably call him to himself."

"May he graciously refrain from that," responded Bugenhagen; "but I cannot comprehend that your dear husband was so cheerful and confident just now, as though nothing ailed him?"

"Oh, you are aware," said she, "how with his quiet and retiring disposition, he can commit everything to God. He hardly ever complains to men of his troubles

when they can give him no aid, unless indeed he can be of some use to them by the recital of his sufferings."

"Very true," added Bugenhagen. "The Reverend Doctor has the wonderful faculty of accommodating himself to all who apply to him for consolation. Ah, how kindly your dear husband is, how opposed to all affectation and hypocrisy! But permit me to obey his injunction, and to serve him as far as lies in my power."

Thus speaking, Bugenhagen took his leave and entered the well-known apartment. Within he found the sick man engaged in deep meditation, as if in prayer, so that he either failed to notice or did not heed the entrance of his friend.

The painted windows cast a mild, almost mysterious light on LUTHER, whose eyes remained directed toward the elegantly-carved ivory crucifix, which was hung from the wall. The portraits of Melanchthon and the Elector of Saxony, painted by Lucas Kranach, seemed silent witnesses of the quiet work of a heart communing with God; and the only thing which for a moment disturbed the devotional spirit of Bugenhagen, was a caricature of the Pope, likewise a product of the same artist's hand. The flute and guitar hanging near the door, which had often brought cheer to the sorrowing soul of the sorely-tried man, had evidently temporarily lost their power. Had not Bugenhagen heard from LUTHER'S own lips that music was a *divine revelation*, which man would never have invented without the inspiration of God? Had not LUTHER called music the *language of the angels in heaven*, and also *of the ancient prophets on earth?* Had not LUTHER often

asserted that by music he could most graciously and comfortingly express his cares and burdens, his tears and sorrows, his love and gratitude to God? And now this could no longer avail, and the worthy pastor was convinced that a most serious and depressing time had come upon LUTHER.

Much as he felt inclined to speak to the invalid and to ascertain what gave him such special concern, he yet did not venture to disturb him in his devotions, but remained at some distance, quietly waiting till LUTHER should address him. By and by his language became more and more distinct and intelligible.

"Let not your heart be troubled!" repeated LUTHER in a low voice to himself, as though he were reciting a lesson. "'Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house house are many mansions.' Here, dear Lord, thou dost thyself enjoin that we be of good cheer and not afraid. For we know where we are to abide; we need therefore indulge in no care about our resting place, for it is already prepared, and awaits us on our departure hence. Grant me grace, dear Lord, that I may believe and be comforted by the certainty that our dwelling-place is not only already prepared, but that thou wilt come again to take us to thyself where thou art. I therefore commit myself and my wife and my child, and all that I have and am, to thee, and leave them in thy faithful hands. Only a little while, and thou wilt come to deliver me and take me to thyself, that I may be where thou art, and in thy presence rejoice because of my present sorrow. Come quickly, dear Lord, and do not tarry. Amen."

LUTHER now turned to the pastor, saluting him with

a grasp of the hand, and requested him to be seated. When Bugenhagen had complied, LUTHER threw himself on a chair at his side, as though all his physical powers were exhausted, and said: "Worthy and dear sir, I beseech you to hear my confession, and pronounce the forgiveness of sins unto me."

Bugenhagen, already deeply saddened by the tenor of LUTHER'S prayer, was greatly startled when LUTHER suddenly turned to him with such a request. As John the Baptist would have dissuaded the Lord who came to his baptism, with the words: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" so was Bugenhagen constrained to dissuade the great leader whose disciple he publicly acknowledged himself to be; but the look of confidence and humility, which coming from LUTHER'S eyes penetrated his soul, came to him as a command, not to be disobeyed, and he said, "Proceed."

Then LUTHER laid his folded hands on his bosom, and made confession, saying, "I, a poor sinner, confess myself guilty of many sins before God; in particular do I confess before you, worthy and dear sir, that I am a most unworthy servant of my Lord Jesus Christ, whom I serve unworthily in all the work which he has committed to me. I have often forgotten his precept: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you;' and I have with harsh speech and angry disposition smitten those who opposed me and my labors. And I have often pained my dear wife by words and deeds, and have not shown my child all the paternal love which I owe him. For all this I am heartily sorry and very penitent, and pray for grace."

"God be gracious unto you, and strengthen your faith," said Bugenhagen, and then continued: "Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?"

"Yes, dear sir," replied LUTHER. "The Lord has said: 'Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.'"

"Be it unto thee, then, according to thy faith," returned Bugenhagen, impressed with the priestly authority conferred upon him. "And I, in obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, forgive thee thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. Go in peace."

"Have you no further comfort for me?" asked LUTHER, in a tone of heart-felt longing.

Then the pastor answered and said: "Yes, you shall have the fullness of that which the Lord has promised to all penitent and humble sinners. Comfort yourself with the glorious words of our Redeemer and Saviour. by which he calls all weary and humbled sinners to himself, when he says: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Be comforted with his word: 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out,' and with the assurance, which is yea and amen, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

"Ah! dear sir," cried LUTHER, "that indeed refreshes my thirsty soul, but I still suffer great misery. Give me still more comfort; give me all that is given to you for the healing of the sick. My soul is sorrowful unto death."

Bugenhagen, who had until now performed the

function of his priestly office with quiet dignity, now gave free vent to the feelings of his heart. The consciousness that he was called in God's stead to revive a contrite and humble spirit, filled him with a joyous readiness, and as the disciple may well cheer the master in his own way, he said: "Do but drink from the fountain of eternal life, and receive from God's hand the refreshing draught which he offers you in his word. His word, and naught else on earth, can comfort you. In your trials look not too much upon yourself, and do not judge yourself by the feeling that moves your soul; but receive the words written and given for your consolation. Plant yourself boldly on them, as on a solid rock, and direct all the thoughts and feelings of your heart toward his gracious promises until they are absorbed by them."

"Yes, sir," answered LUTHER. "I will do that; I will bury the thought which assails me, *whether I shall be saved*, in the depths of God's mercy."

"But you must not think," continued Bugenhagen, "that you are the only one who is thus tempted to doubt his salvation. You will know that many, as St. Paul writes, experience such trials. How often does David in the Psalter cry out and lament: 'I am cut off from before thine eyes, and, I am like them that go down into the pit.' Among the godly such assailing thoughts are no rarity; they are indeed grievous, but yet they are *all right*."

"Continue, your words comfort me," pleaded LUTHER. "What you are telling me is new to me, though old. I myself have cheered others in their trouble, with these very words; but to-day this consolation

seems to me perfectly new and glorious. Ah, how wondrous is the power of the Comforter! And even if I repeat to myself the language ten times over, it still falls on dry, desert soil, and takes no root; but in your mouth, dear sir, it becomes as the mustard-seed to me. Oh, continue to cheer me! Have you no idea what will be the end of my affliction?"

"The Lord alone holds the measure in his hand," answered Bugenhagen. "Besides, you must take heed not to desire a release from your assailment, *unless it be the will of God.* Say to the Lord with a firm confidence: Thy will and not mine be done, if it be thy will that I shall drink this cup."

"Poor, sinful man that I am," said LUTHER, "how could I forget these words? I have as yet barely tasted a few drops from the cup of sorrow, and am already sated with the draught. Ah, dear Lord, the medicine which benefits is ever bitter. Alas! I might say with Job: 'Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.'"

"Commune with the Lord always;" rejoined the pastor. "There is no more potent remedy for trouble, than for the heart to begin a conversation with God. David acted accordingly, and said: 'I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.' For the evil spirit of melancholy cannot be driven away with sadness and lamentation, and with grieving and anxiety, but only with the praise of God, which makes the heart glad."

"Yes," said Luther to himself, with bowed head, "I will thank and praise God, because he has deemed me worthy of such visitation, of which so many thousands

are deprived. It would indeed be neither good nor profitable for man to know what great benefit may be concealed under such temptation. Some have desired to know it, and thereby have done themselves harm."

"God preserve you from that," admonished the pastor. "Continue as you have hitherto done, to bear the hand of God laid so heavily upon you, and do this in all the affliction still in store for you. There is no need of fear, and affliction is no misfortune, but rather a manifestion of divine grace and love toward us poor mortals."

"How can I do this of my own strength?" responded LUTHER. "Alas! we do not even know what we should ask for. I entreat you, dear sir, pray for me diligently. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

"I have," replied Bugenhagen, "in my prayers, never forgotten you and our holy cause; and in all Christendom, I truly believe there is not a soul devoted to the pure gospel, which does not remember you in its prayers. But I, above all, stand in need of your prayers to the Lord in my behalf. Your prayer has greater power than the prayer of all of us together."

"Yes, *the most unworthy receives the greatest mercy*," answered LUTHER. "Will you allow me, worthy and dear sir, to partake of the holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, on the morrow?"

"Yes, come and eat and drink!" said the pastor, his countenance beaming with joy. "How glad I am to hear this from you! It proves to me that you are in good hopes respecting your life and health, and that you will be able to preach to-morrow."

"Do not deceive yourself," rejoined LUTHER. "It may be the last testimony that I shall give. I am really thinking seriously of the nearness of death. If the Lord presses upon me a second time as he did this morning, then must I yield to his might. Well, if the Lord wishes to call me now, his will be done."

Bugenhagen's cheerfulness was completely dispelled by these words. "May the dear Lord graciously forbid!" he exclaimed in alarm.

"Ah, you can neither know nor even imagine how hard and how heavy the hand of the Lord lies upon me," said LUTHER. "What I endured this morning has so filled me with terror and despondency, that I could not express it, even if I would. And now for many days and weeks I have been staggering beneath this heavy cross, and can well say with my dear St. Paul: '*I die daily.*'"

"And how often," observed Bugenhagen, desirous to check the melancholy of his friend to the best of his ability, "how often have we during this very time seen you so cheerful!"

"Yes, my brother," said LUTHER, smiling sadly. "Many think my path strewn with roses, because I at times appear joyous. But God knows the wretchedness in which I live! I have often resolved for the sake of others to demean myself more seriously and—I know not, how to call it—more holily; but God has not given me the ability."

"Will you not praise God for having given you a cheerful heart?" asked Bugenhagen. "Has not Solomon said: 'A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.'"

"Yes, but cheerfulness may be carried too far," responded LUTHER. "The world indeed, God be praised, can find no vice in me, which it can truthfully charge against me. Nevertheless, it is offended at me. Perhaps God wishes to make the blind, ungrateful world a fool on my account, that it may destroy itself by this contempt, and not be worthy to see and use the beautiful gifts with which God has graciously endowed me before thousands of other men, in order that I may serve them. And for the very reason that the world does not think very much of the theme of salvation, which God offers through me, his weak and humble instrument, it takes offence and stumbles. What God means by this, I leave to him. Daily I pray earnestly to him to grant me grace to give no one cause for offence through any sin of mine."

Pausing at this point, LUTHER rose and walked up and down the room a few moments. Just then the convent clock struck ten.

"Do you remember," Bugenhagen now asked, "that you and Doctor Jonas and I are invited to take dinner with certain of the nobility?"

"Yes," he replied, "but I have no desire for food and drink. Go yourself with brother Jonas, and make my excuse."

"But what are we without you?" said Bugenhagen. "Comply, if possible, with the wish of the guests who are awaiting you, and do not remain away."

"Not so, my brother," objected LUTHER. "I would rather remain here for an hour or two and comply with the will of my God. Go and greet all the good friends for me."

When Bugenhagen saw that he could accomplish nothing by his pleading, he took leave of LUTHER and left the sorely-tried man alone in his chamber. As he passed the room of Madame Catharine, she came out and enquired after the physical and mental condition of her husband, and thanked God heartily that it was not so unfavorable as she had feared.

"But one thing I must beseech you to do," added Bugenhagen. "You know that we are invited to Paul Schulte's, to dine to-day in company with several of the nobility. But your dear husband will not accompany us. I trust you will use your endeavors, madame, to persuade him to go, and not remain sitting at home alone. It would, I hope, produce a good effect on him to be with us, and to join in our general talk. It might be the very best way to drive away the evil spirit of melancholy."

Madame Catharine promised to do what she could, and Bugenhagen returned to his home.

CHAPTER XVI.

LUTHER NEAR UNTO DEATH.

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." Isaiah xlii. 3.

MADAME CATHARINE LUTHER, in the end, prevailed on her husband to take part in the dinner at the Black Eagle. He went unwillingly, and solely that he might not appear too unyielding to the entreaties of his dear Kate; perhaps, too, in the weak hope of checking his melancholy somewhat by genial conversation. Baron Marcus of Wildenfels, and the noble Hans Loeser, had jointly ordered the dinner at Paul Schulte's, really in honor of LUTHER, though Bugenhagen and Justus Jonas had also been invited to take part.

LUTHER, being of a thoroughly German disposition, accessible to every cordial, harmless pleasure, soon became joyful with those who were glad; and as usual spiced the meal with his inexhaustible humor, which, while awakening social hilarity, yet in its ultimate effect was always a stone contributed toward the building up of God's kingdom on earth, and constantly kept the minds of his hearers within the bounds of morality and decorum, as well as of Christian piety. LUTHER was able, as few are, to fulfill the apostolic injunction, "Rejoice evermore," in such a way that all who were brought in contact with him were as much edified, moved and awakened in heart and conscience, admon-

ished and comforted by his wit, as they were by his most solemn earnestness. The words flowed from his lips like a perennial fountain from a deep rock. He never had occasion to hunt for what he happened to need or wished to have, but he dispensed what he chanced to have at the moment, and which was always alike good and well prepared; always varied, and yet always the very thing appropriate.

This power of will is the more to be wondered at, because by it he at all times maintained a supremacy over all physical and mental suffering, which enabled him to show a cheerful mien to his friends, whilst his whole soul was overwhelmed with care.

The dinner, which in those times began at eleven o'clock, was, at least as regards LUTHER, finished long before twelve. He had eaten and drunk but little, and arose sooner than usual, to the regret of the remaining guests. Bugenhagen and Jonas left the inn at the same time with LUTHER; Bugenhagen in order to collect his thoughts for the vesper sermon; Jonas, on the other hand, for the purpose of accompanying his dear friend. "I think," he said to Jonas, "a little fresh air might do me good. The terrible attack of this morning is still sending spasms through every limb."

Accompanied by Jonas, he entered the garden of the latter in the rear of the house. "God willing," he said, "I will leave my heaviness and sadness here. Not that I wish to impart it to you," he added, with a smile, "but that you may assist me in driving it away."

And so he sat with his friend, Jonas, for some two hours, and conversed with him about the cares and conflicts which filled his soul that very moment. He

then arose with increased cheerfulness to return to his home. "Give me and my Kate the pleasure," he said in parting, "of your company for supper this evening, and bring your dear wife with you."

So the two men parted, little anticipating an anxious re-union in a short hour; for when Jonas with his wife at five o'clock, the customary hour for supper, proceeded to the convent, they were received by Madame Catharine with a very sad countenance. "My dear husband," said she, "has gone to bed, to rest a little. He came home in great weakness."

"My God!" said Jonas, "how speedily has he changed for the worse! He left me in such good spirits! It will hardly be proper now for us to remain."

"O, yes," rejoined Madame Catharine. "My dear husband expects you, and requests you not to be wearied at his delay, but to take into account his physical weakness."

As the good hostess had already prepared supper, and LUTHER had certainly promised to partake, Jonas was persuaded to remain, and soon after was rejoiced to see LUTHER enter the room. His appearance had changed but little, but he complained of an unusually great and powerful ringing and roaring in his left ear. Solely on account of his dear invited guests and friends did he take his seat at the table, but soon arose and said: "You will have to excuse me, but really I am so weak that I can stay no longer. I will go back to my room and lie down."

So saying, he arose and staggered out of the room. His troubled wife desired to follow him, but first gave some necessary directions to the servants, and thus it

happened that the attentive Jonas went up alone with his suffering host to his room.

Hardly had LUTHER entered, when his face changed color, and throwing out his hands to preserve himself from falling, he sunk headlong into his room, powerless, before Jonas could come to his aid.

"Jonas," he exclaimed, "I am deathly sick. Give me water, or something, or I perish," and now his voice was hushed, his hands and face pale and cold, like unto death; without feeling, without motion, without life, he lay there like a corpse. In his alarm Jonas seized a jar of cold water which fortunately stood near by, and threw its entire contents over LUTHER'S face and neck.

Gradually a little color came into the pale cheeks and tinged them with a slight glow; but the eyes remained closed, the body extended like that of a dying man, the hands lying at his side motionless. And now he opens his mouth, murmuring in a low, broken voice: "My God, beloved over all, if thou wilt that this be the supreme hour, which thou hast ordained for me, thy gracious will be done."

With great exertion he then raised his heavy eyelids, directed his eyes upward, and prayed with the deepest ardor of his heart HIS PRAYER—the holy prayer of our LORD, and then continued with the words of the sixth Psalm:

"O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger,
Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak:
O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.
My soul is also sore vexed; but thou, O Lord, how long?

Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.
For in death there is no remembrance of thee:
In the grave who shall give thee thanks?
I am weary with my groaning;
Mine eye is consumed because of grief;
It waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

And now a glad smile covered his pale, emaciated countenance, like the sad joy of a dying saint; he raised his cold hands and said:

"Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity;
For the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping;
The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.
Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed;
Let them return and be ashamed suddenly."

Dame Luther now entered the room, and when she saw her husband lying prostrate on the floor like a dead man, she uttered a loud cry of anguish, and called out to the servant-maids to hasten for the Reverend Doctor Pommer and the physician. She then threw herself upon the sick man, and wept and lamented until he desired to be removed to his bed. Jonas and the alarmed wife now relieved the helpless sufferer of part of his clothing, and then carried him to his couch. Madame Katy knew not what to do in her over-powering anxiety. With trembling hand she seized the towel hanging at the door-post, tore it from its fastening, and dipping it into some water, rubbed her husband's brow and face, bedewing him with her hot tears.

"Do not die, dear husband," she cried in her agony, as she wept aloud; "what will become of me, poor woman that I am, without you? Dear husband, have

pity on me; speak but one comforting word to me. Do you not feel better now, my dear, precious husband?"

"I am very weak," he answered in a feeble tone of voice. "All strength has departed from my limbs. I am like a dead man who *knows* that he is dead."

And now he resumed his prayer: "Lord, my God, beloved more than all else, thou knowest how gladly I would have shed my blood for thy word's sake. Thy will be done. If it be thy will, I will gladly die; only cause thy holy name to be praised, whether it be by my life, or by my death. But if it be possible, dear Lord, I would wish to live still longer, for the sake of thy godly and elect people. But if my hour is at hand, do according to thy good pleasure. Thou art the Lord of life and of death."

In the meantime, Jonas and his wife, who had also entered the sick room, together with Madame Katy, amid great anxiety, continued their efforts to revive and warm him, by lotions and friction and cooling drinks, which they administered to him as though he were a child. But it was all in vain; his limbs continued stiff and cold, and the eye alone regained life. The sick man, however, was less concerned about himself than about the holy cause which he had thus far served. He did not seem, or did not care to know, that he was ill. He cared not whether he lived or died, whether there was danger or not. Whilst those about him were in deep anxiety for his life, his soul was occupied solely with God and his word. His whole inner man was uninterrupted prayer, even when his pale lips were closed.

But after he had gazed upward for some minutes, with a look as though his prayer had been answered, he once more prayed aloud—now in German, then in Latin—"My dearly loved Lord, thou hast led me into this holy cause; thou knowest it is thy word and thy truth that I have preached. Let thine enemies not raise their heads to boast against us, and say, 'Where now is their God?' But glorify thy holy name, that the enemies of thy blessed, saving word may be put to shame."

"My dearest Lord Jesus Christ," he resumed anew, after a brief pause, "thou hast graciously granted me the knowledge of thy holy name; thou knowest that I believe in thee, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, the only and the true God; and that is my comfort, that thou art our Mediator and Saviour. Thou knowest, Lord," he went on, with increasing warmth and in a more urgent, ardent tone, "thou *knowest*, Lord, that many of those to whom thou hast accorded the privilege have shed their blood for the sake of the confession of thy gospel; I had hoped that it would be my lot also to shed my blood for thy holy name's sake. But I have been unworthy of it. Thy will be done! Even St. John the Evangelist, who has written such a powerful book against the popedom, which is the kingdom of the true Antichrist, the like of which I can never write, try as I may, even he did not receive this honor. Thou knowest, Lord, that Satan has in many ways pursued me to compass the destruction of my body; yea, through tyrants, kings, princes, the pope, and mighty lords; and, spiritually, by his fiery arrows and diabolical assaults. But hitherto thou hast won-

derfully preserved me against all their rage and fury. Preserve me still further, thou faithful Lord, if it be thy will."

At last Doctor Augustine Schurff arrived, and pastor Bugenhagen almost at the same time. The physician soon saw what was needed. He ordered pillows and blankets to be placed as warm as possible on the body and feet of the sick man, changing them frequently. The two women, as well as the servant, divided the labor among themselves, and but a few minutes had elapsed when the suspended animation regained life and motion. "Be of good cheer, my dear doctor," was Schurff's joyous exclamation, "God willing, there will be no danger this time."

"If the Lord delivers me," was LUTHER'S calm reply, "it is not for my sake, but for yours. O, my dear friends, and you my dear Kate in particular, pray for me earnestly. The Lord delights in intercession for poor, sinful men, when made with a humble heart."

"We will surely do that," answered Bugenhagen; "but do you also pray the Lord Christ not to take from our midst the faithful servant of his holy word, that you may remain with us yet longer for our comfort and the comfort of thousands who would miss you sadly.,'

On this he smiled, calm and happy in his hopefulness, and said: "Indeed, my dear sir, so far as regards myself, *to die would be my gain;* but to continue longer in the flesh might well be necessary for the sake of others. Dear God, I know not what to ask: thy will be done. But I rejoice that I have made my confession to you this day, and that you have absolved me."

"Then *you* believe that you will not die?" asked Bugenhagen.

"As yet I cannot tell," he replied. "Why should not the hour of my departure be at hand? And as the world delights in falsehood, many perhaps will say that I retracted my doctrines before my death. It is my earnest desire, therefore, that you two, Doctor Jonas and Doctor Pommer, be witnesses to my confession of faith. I say with a clear conscience that I have taught the word of God aright, according to God's command, to which work the faithful Lord has drawn and urged me even independently of my own will. Yes, I say that I have taught aright and savingly concerning faith, love, the cross, the sacrament, and other articles of Christian faith."

"The Lord knows that this is true and genuine comfort," said Jonas; "you have done and spoken only what the Lord has enjoined in his Word and by his Holy Spirit."

"But many," responded LUTHER, "blame me as being too severe and vehement when I write against the papists, the factious, and the sacramentarians, and rebuke their false doctrines, godless conduct and hypocrisy. Yes, truly have I been vehement at times, and have attacked my adversaries roughly, yet in such a way that I have never regretted it. Whether I be vehement or moderate, I have never sought the personal injury of any one, much less the loss of their souls; but rather the welfare and salvation of everybody, even of my bitterest enemies."

At these words his voice again became unsteady, and even tender, while tears forced their way from his

eyes. He wept over the enemies of the gospel. "Alas!" he continued, with voice oppressed, "how many factions and sects have lately arisen, who falsify and pervert God's word, and spare not the little flock of God which he bought with his own blood. Oh! I cannot acknowledge often enough, in all humility, how God has graciously endowed me, his unworthy servant, with so many beauteous gifts not given to thousands of others, which I would gladly use for his glory and for the advantage and consolation of his people, if such were his will. I had resolved to write a treatise on Christ's holy ordinance of baptism, and also against Zwingli and others, who falsify and pervert the doctrine of the Holy Sacrament. But perhaps it is not God's will, since it seems that he has determined otherwise respecting me. You, dear friends and companions in the conflict, will now be unequal in the contest with the fanatics who are everywhere making inroads. How great will be the abominations which the sacramentarians, anabaptists, and other fanatics will originate after my death! Yes, I find comfort in the thought that Christ is stronger than Satan, yea, that he is Master."

Luther's voice grew weaker and weaker as he spoke these last words, the tears meanwhile flowing down his cheeks; and now it failed entirely. His face and hands again assumed their death-like pallor, and it seemed as though the muscles of the cheeks were collapsing; his faintness increased, the whole body became cold like that of a corpse, and a dark, awful film overspread his eyes. At the instance of the physician, the efforts to produce warmth were redoubled. Cloths, cushions,

clothing, and anything in any way suitable which could be found in the haste of the emergency, were warmed at the fire, and laid on the chest, and particularly on the feet of the patient; and yet there was an absence of all perspiration.

And although he looked like death, yet was his spirit as strong as ever. Apparently a dead man, but still able to speak, he resumed: "My God and my Lord, thou art indeed a God of the sinful and wretched, who feel their need and utter wretchedness, and who heartily desire thy grace, thy comfort, and thy help. Thou sayest: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Lord, I now come at thy promise. I am in great concern and need. Help me for the sake of thy grace and faithfulness. Amen."

All of those who were grouped around the sick man's bed, took up the words of his prayer into their own troubled hearts, and through it interceded in his behalf before God. Madame Catharine was unwearied in her work of rubbing her husband's chest with a warm cloth; but the icy coldness as yet refused to leave, and LUTHER'S whole countenance resembled that of a dead man, the nostrils sunken, a true picture of misery, and a warning as to the frailty of man's body and life, which impressed the beholders with awe.

LUTHER now folded his hands, and said: "My God and Father, if at times I have been too careless and frivolous in speech, thou knowest that I did it to dispel the sadness of my weak flesh, not with evil intent."

Then, as though there lay in this confession an

element of weakness, of which he should feel ashamed and accuse himself before God, he continued, with increasing strength and with the energy at his command: "To you, dear pastor, and you, Doctor Jonas, and those of you who now surround me, a dying man, to you all I solemnly repeat that you are to bear witness that I retract nothing of all which I have written against the pope, but that I hold every word to be the *gospel truth.* If to some I seem to have been too harsh and too free, I wish you to understand that *I am not sorry for it.* God knows, I have wished no one ill."

Again he raised his eyes toward heaven and said: "Once more, O Lord, I come before thee, and say: Lord, if thou wilt that I shall die on this my bed, thy will be done; but alas! I would rather have shed my blood in thy cause."

Hot tears continued to bedew his cheeks, until by and by a blissful smile of peace and acquiescence in God's will overspread his face. He closed his eyes, laid his folded hands upon his breast, while his lips continued to quiver in silent prayer.

Throughout the room there prevailed a death-like stillness, which none ventured to disturb. Even poor Madame Catharine, whose heart was nearly broken with grief, suppressed her feelings and embodied all her grief and cares into her husband's prayers and sighs, in which she silently joined.

All at once LUTHER cried out: "Where is my son? Where is my dear little Hans? Let me see my dear son, that I may bless him ere I die."

A servant girl now brought the child, which the

mother took upon her arm, and carried to its father's bed. The child smiled, and stretched out its little hands eagerly toward its father. But he was unable to raise his stiffened arms to press his child to his heart.

"Well, I can at least see thee," he exclaimed, in a sadly depressed voice; "you good, poor child, you smile upon me as you have always done, and as if no evil had befallen me. You are happy, like the dear angels in heaven, and you know not that you may become a helpless orphan this very day. Mine enemies and adversaries will be thine also; they will endeavor to defame thy honest name for my sake; but I know that God is the Father of the orphan, and the protector of the widow, and that he provides for both, and I will not anticipate trouble for thee. The Lord bless thee, my child."

"Poor woman that I am," said Madame Catharine, as her tears flowed. "How shall I fare if you go home?"

"Take courage," answered LUTHER; "if God wills to take me to himself this time, I entreat you to acquiesce in his gracious will. I well know that the papists, who cannot destroy my work, in lieu thereof will attack and defame my name and my person. They wish to cover thee and me, and our wedlock, with reproach. But my dearest Kate, thou art nevertheless my truly wedded wife in the sight of God and his Word. Of this thou must be sure, and entertain no doubts—let the blind, wicked world say what it will to the contrary. Direct thy ways according to God's word, and hold fast to it; then thou wilt have a sure and constant comfort against the devil, and all slanderous lips that do his bidding."

His sorrowing wife was unable to reply; her voice was almost choked by her tears. She sat down, weary unto death with her own troubles, at the foot of her husband's bed, took the child on her lap, and at length said, as she drew the little fellow to her bosom and kissed him "Yes, my dear little Hans, we will not be afraid. God feeds the ravens, why should he not feed you and me also?

The sight moved LUTHER'S heart. "My dearly beloved God," he exclaimed, "I thank thee heartily that I am poor and a beggar on earth, and that I can for this reason leave neither house, nor land, nor money, nor goods, to my wife and my son. As thou hast given them to me, so return I them to thee, thou rich and faithful God. Support them, teach them, sustain them, as thou hast hitherto supported, taught and sustained me, O thou who art the Guardian and Father of the widow and the orphan."

"You know, dear Kate," he continued, turning to his wife, "that we have nothing besides the two silver goblets; but the Lord has everything. I commend you, my dear Kate, and you, poor little orphan, to my dear, good and faithful God."

This address, so rich in comfort, filled the heart of the poor wife with peace and rest in God. "My dearest husband, if it be God's will, I would rather have you with God than with me. But it not only concerns me and my child, but many, very many, pious and Christian people, who are yet in need of you. Do not, then, dearest husband, be troubled on my account. I commend you to his divine mercy; but I hope and trust that the good God will preserve you to us."

"God hath put that into your heart," said LUTHER, calmly. Then he lifted his half-dimmed eyes toward heaven in prayer: "O my dear Lord Jesus Christ, who hast said: 'Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,' in accordance with this petition grant me, O Lord, I beseech thee, not gold and silver, but a strong and a firm faith. *Let me find, because I seek*, not the pleasure or joy of the world, but comfort and refreshment through thy blessed, saving word. *Open unto me, because I knock.* I desire nothing that the world deems great and exalted, for in thy sight I am not a hair's breadth better than all other sinful men; but do thou grant me thy Holy Spirit to enlighten my heart, to strengthen and comfort me in the right faith, and confidence in thy grace unto the end. Amen."

Meanwhile the physician, aided by the women, had busily applied the prescribed means for producing warmth, and Schurff was now rejoiced to feel a more active pulse. The sick man's face gradually acquired a more healthful expression. The pale, ash-colored cheeks were covered with a light, fleeting glow, the respiration gained in strength, and the eye in particular gradually recovered its wonted clear glance.

"I feel," now exclaimed LUTHER joyously, "I feel better, thank God. My faintness is growing less, and my powers are returning. If I could only perspire, there would by God's grace be no further trouble for this time."

The physician, full of glad confidence, shared this hope with him, and requested those present to leave the room, in order that the sick man might rest better,

and thus be able to perspire. The kind hostess on her part requested her dear friends to remain awhile, and partake of supper with her.

And after they had all commended the patient to the hand of the heavenly Physician, they left him, and followed Madame Katy to the room below.

A brief hour had expired, when the physician also entered the dining apartment, his eyes gladdened with joy. "I bring good news," he said. "The heavenly Physician has blessed our care and our efforts. A wholesome perspiration has made its appearance, and we can now have good hopes that the emergency is over, and the dear Doctor out of danger."

With this comforting assurance in their hearts, Bugenhagen and Jonas went to the sick room for a few moments, and after greeting LUTHER, wished him a quiet night, and returned to their homes.

When they returned on the following Sunday morning, they found that the hopes of the physician had been realized. The roaring in the head was the only thing which had not fully subsided, but his powers were visibly stronger.

And when they came back in the evening, they found the sick man in his wife's room.

"The waves of the sea have ceased to roar," he cried out to his friends as they entered, extending his hand in heartfelt joy. "This time the messenger of Satan has buffeted me, like St. Paul, lest I should be exalted. But the Lord, who commands the winds and the waves, has driven away the storm."

"The Lord be praised!" said Jonas.

"Brother Jonas," now continued LUTHER, his voice

growing tender, like that of a happy child; "I must note yesterday as a day in which I was at school, and sat in a hot bath. But the Lord bringeth down to the grave and raiseth up. The Lord killeth and maketh alive; for he is the Lord of life and of death. To him be praise, honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER XVII.

FICHTNER'S MASTERPIECE.

"Thus saith the Lord: To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. lxvi. 2.

LEONARD FICHTNER was at work in Master Homberger's shop, not indeed on the altar with the fourteen helpers, to which he could never have applied his hand, notwithstanding his love for his art. And it is not likely that he hoped for his master's approval of the work which was steadily gaining form and expression beneath his hand. He was his own paymaster in this work, and his remuneration no other than the heartfelt joy experienced in the growing success which attended his labors.

His work was a masterpiece in the full sense of the word; without a model, without a sketch, without any preparations whatever, he wrought at a shapeless block of wood, so that one would at first have thought he was cutting, chiseling and hammering at the wood for mere pastime; but after nearly three weeks of toil, there grew out of the rough block the head of a beautiful woman, with long hair, which flowed down regardless of care, with a fine open brow, and a lovely face with an expression of genuine childlike faith, and with half-closed eyelids.

Often in the course of the work he would stop for a moment and shade his eyes with his hands, as though looking at the model in his mind, and then with a hap-

py smile go on with his task. The earliest ray of the sun found him in the workshop, busily engaged, without taking any rest, and even forgetting to eat and to drink; he even preferred to forego his sleep, as though life depended on the completion of the work.

One day, as the month of July of the same year 1527 was drawing to a close, when he was busily toiling with his whole soul absorbed in his work, he was disturbed by a slight noise; and glancing up toward the door, he saw Catharine Homberger standing before him, no longer that Catharine who had been so round in body, so full of buoyant, overflowing spirits, but a form bent with grief and care. The roses on her cheeks had faded away, deep shadows gathered around her eyes, themselves without light and life; her very dress betrayed, if not disorder and untidiness, at least an almost bitter poverty. No bracelet of gold or of silver, no ring, no chain, adorned her person; even the rosary of shining pearls threaded together, which had been so becoming to her, was wanting.

"Miss Catharine," exclaimed Leonard, surprised and rejoiced at once, "has the physician indeed permitted you to leave your chamber to-day? I bid you welcome to God's free, fresh air, and may the Lord bless your short excursion."

"I thank you, sir," she replied, in a feeble voice; "my stay will not be long. The short walk hither has taken away my strength. I am—I am very weak and weary."

"Be seated," said Fichtner, hastily clearing a wooden chair of its load of a variety of carving tools. "I shall place the seat near the door, so that you may enjoy

the fresh air and the warm rays of the sun without hindrance. And how are you faring?"

Catharine smiled sadly, and said: "Do you ask the crushed flower how it fares? It can vouchsafe no reply; but it is slowly dying away for all that."

"O no, no!" rejoined Leonard, with emotion and heart-felt sympathy; "even the crushed flower does not wither, and the bruised reed is not broken, if the heavenly Gardener holds his protecting and healing hand over them. True, you have been cast down with a grievous sickness; but the Lord has awakened you to new life. Rejoice, Catharine, and thank the heavenly Physician who roused you from death."

"You can not deceive me with a false hope," rejoined Catharine, mildly and gently. "Have you not heard that the plague yesterday carried off its first victim here in Wittenberg? It will stretch out its hand toward me also, and I have not the strength to escape."

"You have not," said Fichtner, quickly, "but the mighty and merciful God and Lord, who in his unsearchable wisdom permits this horrible pestilence from the south to visit us—*he* has the might and the power. Do not fear, dear Catharine. As yet it is not perfectly sure, whether the plague has really broken out or not; and if it should come so far, you well know that no one can escape the hour of his death. Will you not hold fast to the word? 'For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord.'"

"I do not fear death," she answered very sadly and as one without comfort, but by no means in the tone

of a cheerful readiness for death. "I shall rejoice when I am carried to my grave."

"Dear Catharine," returned Leonard, "I do not wish to pain you, for you have often told me that I have no sympathy for you. And yet I cannot bear to see you try to comfort yourself with a false consolation. You say that you would be glad to die; but your heart is not glad, and even admitting that you do not fear death yet you are not willing and ready to die."

"Alas!" exclaimed the young woman, painfully wounded by these words, "you seem to wish my death. Am I then so greatly in the way of your happiness that you grudge me a place on earth?"

"How you wrong me!" returned the young man, hastily. "God knows how glad I am that you have arisen from your sick-bed, where you were certainly nigh unto death! I mean only, dear Catharine, that it is not Christian to deceive ourselves respecting the form and hour of death. I do not deem it a sin to confess that I should like to live longer, yea, much longer. This wish proceeds from my heart, but yours does not."

"You would, indeed," replied Catharine, "be the first happy person that would like to die. Death is only welcome to the unhappy; and whether I am happy or unhappy, no one can know better than myself."

"But what does happy mean? What does unhappy mean? I have seen happy people who at the bottom of their hearts were the most unhappy; and I know people who would not be unhappy, if they only had real, genuine faith. Dear Catharine, the Christian glories in his very afflictions."

"You wish," rejoined Catharine, with an expression of profound sadness, "you wish to deprive me of all my comfort; and yet I know that I shall rejoice when my miserable life approaches its end."

"Catharine!" exclaimed Leonard, sympathizingly, "that is not *dying unto the Lord.* You regard death merely as a deliverence from temporal evils and suffering; but is there not beyond the death of the body, beyond the grave, another life, which we can enter only when God's grace opens the door?"

"Not merely as a deliverance from temporal pains," replied Catharine, evasively. "Death is the necessary decay of the crushed flower."

"Ah, why will you equivocate?" asked Fichtner, in earnest pleading. "Why will you not hear and ponder the better word within you? You know, dear Catharine, as well as I do, that the death of the body is not a finality that settles matters forever. You can not go down to the grave as though to everlasting annihilation. You know, indeed, that we shall all rise from the dead, but some of us unto life, others unto condemnation. Would you not also like to live with the Lord? Would you not like to be saved?"

Catharine was silent, and quietly wiped the tears from her weary eyes. "Yes," she then answered, "I would like to learn what happiness is, *there* at least."

"At least *there*," repeated Leonard. "Do you wish by this to say that you have not had that experience here on earth? Poor, poor Catharine!"

Further he had not time to speak to the invalid, for all at once she became so feeble that, alarmed, he hastened to her and supported her in his arms.

"Let me go," she entreated with a weak voice, "I feel better now. My hour is not yet come, but it will soon. But do not let this trouble you," she quickly continued, with increasing courage, at the same time attempting a smile. "*Whom* on earth will it concern, whether I live or die? Speak of something else, Mr. Fichtner. Tell me something interesting about your life, your beautiful home, your blessed mother. Have you no little sister?"

But ere Fichtner could reply Catharine rose from her seat in visible agitation, and then, as though slightly chilled, added: "I dare not stay here. It will do me good to walk up and down a little."

Scarcely had she taken a few steps, when she sat down again and said in a calmer tone: "Mr. Fichtner, you have been very kind to me during my illness; you have, so the maid tells me, spent many a night in watching at my bedside, and you have taken my place with father. May God reward you! I shall in nowise be able to repay you; a dying woman can not nurse the sick. But tell me: in the middle of the night, at the time when I was probably nearest unto death, and when from weakness I could not raise my eyes or move my tongue, I once felt a gentle, tender hand laid upon my brow, I heard subdued weeping and quiet prayer, and then a soft step passing through the door. It was not you, although you were present. Who was it?"

Leonard hesitated. "I too," he hesitatingly said, "have often laid my hand upon your brow, to feel how much the fever had abated."

"It was not you," Catharine contradicted him some-

what vehemently, her cheeks flushing slightly. "You are unwilling to tell me; now I know without your telling me,— it was Margaret!"

Her voice trembled as she said this, at the same time covering her eyes with her hand.

"Yes, it was Margaret," said Leonard; "was it disagreeable to you, Catharine?"

"Who led her to this house—so long a walk, in the middle of the night?" asked the sister further, without heeding Fichtner's question.

"I myself," answered the young man; "she requested me to do so; she had no rest until, as she said, she had laid her hand on your face."

"And what did she pray," Catharine inquired excitedly, "I know that she prayed."

"She prayed silently," said Fichtner; "but I know without her having told me, that she prayed for you—for your restoration to health."

"No, no!" rejoined Catharine, impetuously and nervously; "I know better, I heard it distinctly—she accused me before God."

"Catharine," now replied Leonard, in a tone of most painful grief, "how little you know your sister's pious, child-like disposition! Margaret is incapable of accusing any one, unless it be herself. Alas! you cannot conceive how tenderly your sister loves you."

"No, no, you can not deceive me," the unhappy girl continued, excitedly repelling the suggestion. "I understood every word she spoke. She said that I had torn her away from her father's heart, had poured poison into her cup of life, had thrust her forth from the house; and that the Lord had recorded every

wicked act of mine, and that no confession and no absolution could save me. O, sir, have pity on me, I know not what I am saying. My thoughts and senses are failing me." Thus saying she rose hastily to leave, but her strength failed and she sank back upon the chair. And now she gave free vent to her tears, and Fichtner had not the courage to interrupt, by one single word, her silent grief.

By and by Catharine's excitement subsided; truly was she smitten with the fear of God's judgment, but she had not yet pressed forward to the love of God, as she did not yet understand the grace of God in Christ.

Fichtner perceived how she controlled herself, and how she assumed a cheerful, unconcerned manner, but which really expressed more of bitter concern than of real happiness in her pale, attenuated features.

"I see," she now said, "you are carving the figure of a woman;" and rising to her feet she stood before the work. Then, after she had examined it with some care, she suddenly started, and turning around hastily, laid both hands over her eyes, and said in a tone of satisfaction tinged with hopelessness: "And this too!"

But the conflict was soon over. "I knew it," she said to herself. "Am I not foolish to be startled? Tell me, dear Mr. Fichtner," turning to the latter calmly, and with an air of innocence, as though nothing had been said or done, "did Margaret sit as your model for this?"

"No," answered Leonard, his cheeks deeply flushed and his eyes cast down as though he were conscious of some crime committed by him; but soon he regained his usual, honest, ingenuous bearing, and then pro-

ceeded: "Dear Catharine, you know that I have never concealed my heart's thoughts from you; I have even spoken that to you which I know must wound you deeply. The question which you have addressed to me somehow, I do not know why, strikes my conscience like an accusation. Let me tell you how it came to pass. I felt impelled to practice my art, and at first intended to execute a statue of the Saviour; but I was intimidated by the greatness of the Son of God, even in his human form on earth, and had not the courage to make an image of him who is invisible in my heart, the Lord, the King of heaven and of earth. Then I thought of the Lord's apostles; but they, too, stood above the reach of my art. Then at last the thought struck me: attempt only what you are able to do, make a representation of your own inner life, a visible exponent of your faith. Yes, dear Catharine, thus I went to work with the desire to *create a representation of a human soul blessed by its faith in the Lord.* The work grew beneath my hand, and when the countenance was finished, behold! it was that of your dear sister, *Margaret!*"

"An image of faith, and *blind?*" asked Catharine, forcing herself to appear calm.

Leonard gazed at the girl fixedly, and said: "Dear sister, do you not know the word of the Lord? 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'"

"No," she rejoined. "Do you mean to say that the blind alone can exercise faith?"

"How shall I answer your question?" exclaimed the young man. "*Yes and no! Yes,* if you mean

the humble heart, which can neither conceive nor grasp the being and plans of God, nor his justice and grace, and yet receives his revealed word with gladness and faith; and *no*, if you would say that neither I nor you, for example, could have faith because the good and gracious God has given us natural sight. Do you not also believe this, dear Catharine?"

She regarded him with serious, dreamy looks of dejection, and said: "What good will it do me to reply: you have often enough told me that I am unbelieving; you have rejected my prayers, my penitence; you have even ridiculed my tears. You have been my enemy from the very first moment of your entrance into our house, and have judged and condemned me, even before you knew whether I was not deserving of a more lenient sentence. You have exalted my sister above me from the very beginning, and have abased me by word and by deed. You took," she continued, in the morbid excitement of her passion, "you took pleasure in my sufferings, in my tears; you feasted on my unhappiness and trouble; you—"

"Catharine!" Leonard interrupted her, alarmed by the intensity with which she accused him. "Is it possible that this is your real opinion of me? How heartless and forsaken of all divine and human love, how horribly deluded in error and sin would I not have to be, if you are in the right?"

"And I *am* in the right," she continued full of bitterness: "Recall the word or the deed by which you have shown the least kindness to me,—you can find not one. You had a cordial word for every one else,

a friendly smile; for me alone you had sharp-pointed arrows, which pierced my soul through and through. You have thrown me on the bed of sickness; to you I owe that I am wasting away, even unto death."

"May God forgive you," said Fichtner solemnly. "If I really bore this awful burden of guilt which you lay upon me, I would surely be the unhappiest being on earth, and would doubt my soul's salvation."

Then with an insane smile Catharine retorted: "Does that touch your heart? I have long panted for this hour, as one perishing with thirst longs for a drop of water. Yes, feel with your inmost soul, let it burn into your heart, let the pain consume your body like a worm feeding on the dead; all will be but a small part of the suffering you have caused me. And now resume your work, and carve and chisel at the blind eyes; you will never succeed in bringing the dead wood to life, try as you may."

With these words she started hastily to leave the work-shop. But Fichtner seized her hand, and said:

"Catharine, as the Lord lives, I cannot let you go yet. You may judge and condemn me, you may regard me as the greatest and worst of sinners, and I will not object; but I will destroy my soul's certificate of grace with my own hand, if but the smallest offense with which you charge me be true. Catharine, you have believed that I hate you. Answer me: Do we pray for those whom we hate? Do we wish evil to those whom we carry in the heart like a soul sacredly entrusted to our care?"

"I understand you," rejoined Catharine, with a bitter smile; "you wish to say that you *pity* me."

"Well, since you so term it, yes," continued the young man, "I did, and do *sympathize* with you, because I sincerely wish to see you happy and content—because, I confess this before God and yourself, you have no better and more loving friend on earth than myself. Catharine," he added, his voice growing tender, "all this mystery will yet find a pleasant and peaceful solution. Drive away these thoughts of death from your mind. Your father has arisen from his living death, and the Lord will surely and certainly yet awaken him to full mental life. Only believe, dear sister, that there is no wound so wide and so deep that the hand of the Lord is not able to heal it. In love to Christ all will finally find a full atonement."

Catharine was silent; the billows that rose in her heart were smoothed, in part by the exhaustion which was to be expected after such intense excitement of her whole being; in part also probably by the amiability of Leonard's language. She rested her weary head upon her hands, and closed her eyes as if she were slumbering, and for a long time remained quiet and peaceful in this position, whilst Fichtner stood before her, with his countenance expressing deep and most affectionate sympathy.

At length she opened her lips, and with an effort at calm resignation, said: "Mr. Fichtner, you are right. I am sick in body and in soul. I beg you to forgive and forget all that I have spoken to you. I hardly know what I have said myself. If I have pained you, forgive me, please."

"O my dear, good sister!" exclaimed Leonard, with emotion, "I have nothing to forgive you. You have

not pained me, but yourself. Only have confidence in me, that I have always from my very heart meant well with you."

Fichtner wanted to say still more, when a noise in the yard, like the footsteps of some one approaching, interrupted him. Going toward the threshold, he was astonished and frightened to behold Master Homberger on his way to the workshop.

"Your father is coming!" exclaimed Fichtner, anxiously. "What shall we do?"

"Only remain quiet," was her rejoinder, spoken as calmly as though she were not in the least concerned. "He recognizes neither me nor you, and will do neither of us any harm. Proceed, and do not allow yourself to be disturbed. He neither hears nor notices what any one says."

But Leonard was unable to comply with this request. With apprehensive looks and movements he saw the old man draw near, and finally enter the workshop.

Homberger's physical appearance had become so changed that he seemed almost another creature. He looked well, much more vigorous than he did before his sickness. The withered, sunken cheeks had become fuller, and the eyes had lost their dark shadow. He did not look like a sick man, for he had on his work-apron, as though engaged in his accustomed labor.

As he passed Leonard and Catharine, he glanced at them with perfect indifference, spoke not a word, went to his wonted place of work, and examined his various tools with intelligence.

"Shall I interrupt him?" asked Fichtner, with con-

cern, when he saw Homberger take the heavy, large knife in his hand, and test the edge by striking a piece of wood, which he severed in the middle.

"Do not disturb him," enjoined Catharine; "there is nothing to be feared."

Homberger then advanced to the nearly-finished image of the Virgin Mary, inspected it on every side, at times drawing nearer, then stepping back again, and at last raised his arm, still grasping the knife, as though purposing to deal a powerful blow; but Fichtner now rushed forward, grasped his arm, and, depriving the unresisting wood-carver of the weapon, said: "Not so, dear master; spare your work. That is a masterpiece."

Homberger looked at him with icy indifference, and did not make the least endeavor to accomplish his wish; but seizing the wooden figure with a strong hand, he carried it into the remotest and most secluded corner of the room. As he gazed about him, his eye fell on the figure which Fichtner's skillful hand had brought to partial completion. He stood still in surprise, rubbing his eyes and his forehead with his hand, and then, said, as though in a dream: "How is this? O, yes, that is St. Margaret. But what was I thinking about? No provision has been made for the cross on which she must rest the right arm; but it can be done yet."

And now he opened a small cupboard, took from it a pencil, and with a rapid but sure hand sketched upon the lower part of the rough block the outlines of the lower limbs, and at the right foot the upright of the cross up to the cross-piece, upon which its

right arm was to rest, and with a gratified smile said: "It will do yet. This will be a glorious idea."

Fichtner, deeply moved by Homberger's act and words, immediately recognized that a master had come to instruct him in his work. Involuntarily he exclaimed: "Surely, surely! foolish and blind that I am not to have thought of the cross!"

"Do you see it too now, Urban?" added Homberger quickly, in a quiet, complacent tone, as if he were speaking to his dear old friend and fellow-workman. "You yourself have often enough seen St. Margaret in Milan; but never without the cross. Faith must of necessity rest upon the cross. What do you say?" he went on interrogatively, "*The eyes are covered too—nearly closed, and look as if they were nearly blind.* I did that for a good reason. The faith which sees as a man seeth is no faith at all. No, Urban, you must not find fault with the eyes."

"But is not the head bowed too low?" asked Leonard, humoring the old man's delusion.

"No, it is not," answered Homberger; "I have well weighed that, too. Faith, indeed, points upward; but this would have to be expressed by the raised hand. Here faith is humility; the head must be bent—symbolizing that the ear wishes to hear the voice of God more distinctly, and that the eye desires to look into the heart. No, Brother Urban, do not find fault with the figure; this is the best carving I have ever made."

And now he began anew to examine the features of the face, one by one, nodding his head with a smile of satisfaction, and then he hastily grasped the small knife which lay on the work-table. Fichtner became alarmed,

and wanted to take it from him; but on a signal from Catharine, he desisted and anxiously waited to see what he might do. But Homberger sat down on the work-stool, and with a sure and skillful hand cut away a few fine shavings on both sides of the head towards the eyes, and when he was through, exclaimed: "Now, it's right. Look, Urban, can the picture of St. Margaret be more perfect?"

Leonard looked, and was agreeably surprised to see Margaret's dear, pious face stand before him a perfect likeness. He had often told himself that there was a defect somewhere which disturbed the resemblance, but he had not been able to find it. He saw it now, and clapping his hands in heart-felt joy, exclaimed: "Yes, that is Margaret."

But Homberger's face now became overspread with a seriousness partaking of deep devotion. Although his eyes retained their wandering expression, they nevertheless bore witness to a conscious working of his thoughts. He doffed his cap, kneeled before the inanimate figure, folded his hands, and prayed: "O, holy Margaret, intercede for me! Men have done thee much evil, in that they put out thine eyes, and then said that thou wert born blind; and I took part in this, and was the prime mover. And when they had thrust thee from the house, they wanted to put thine eyes in again; but then it was too late, for thou wert dead, and the angels had already carried thee into paradise, and made thee patron saint of all the blind; and now I myself am blind, and grope about in darkness. Holy Margaret, give me back mine eyes! Holy Margaret, pray for me."

Then the old man made the sign of the cross on his brow, his mouth, and his heart, after which he covered his head, bowed toward the image as if it were the high altar, and then quietly went out of the workshop up to his own chamber.

Neither Fichtner nor Catharine had ventured by the smallest sound to disturb the insane man's strange prayer. Fichtner was shocked at the awful power of an accusing conscience, unable to attain a true peace, because it neither knows nor grasps the way, nor the truth, nor the life in Christ.

Catharine sat silent, with bowed head, a true picture of drooping body and life. During her poor father's insane prayer she had several times been tempted to avoid by hasty flight the horrible confession; but she could not, and sometimes looked up toward Fichtner, as if pleading for mercy. When her father had left the work-shop, her bosom heaved a deep sigh, and turning to the young man, she said, with forced calmness: "Do you pray to St. Margaret?"

But before Leonard, agitated by this question, could reply, Catharine hastened from the workshop as speedily as possible.

"Do not follow me!" she cried out to the young man, vehemently and imperiously.

Leonard stood still, looking after her with sorrowful mien, and then, as though he wished to subdue all the conflicting thoughts of his heart with one word, said to himself in a low tone: "*God is love!*"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PLAGUE IN WITTENBERG.

"Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Matt. xxiv. 42.

THE sun was sinking slowly and with a sickly light, and a dismal veil, like the hot smoke rising from the ruins of a conflagration, had spread itself over the city of Wittenberg, and protracted far into the night the oppressive glow that prevailed during the day.

Stephen Hesse, the young officer whose acquaintance we made at the "Black Eagle," arrived from Torgau, passed through the gate wearily and as if he were a fugitive. Despite the oppressive heat, he had thrown a heavy wrapping about his neck, which covered his mouth, to keep out the air. In his hand he carried a small flask, which now and then he held to his nose, after which he each time drew a deep breath. The streets, usually so full of life during the evening hours, were deserted. Only here and there some few persons passed, closely veiled, and without saluting one another. All the doors were locked, as in the middle of the night; even the windows on the first floor were closed and barred.

Before the locked door of a house by which the soldier passed there lay the corpse of a woman, whom death had suddenly surprised. There it had to remain where it had fallen until midnight, when a sombre wagon passed along to remove the dead to the place of burial.

The plague had broken out in the unhappy city.

As the officer was about passing the church of the Augustinians, he heard singing within. His heart prompted him to enter. A dreary gloom pervaded the half-lighted sanctuary, and only from the altar came a tremulous light, the pale rays of burning wax-candles. The numerous congregation present, on bended knees, were singing in suppressed tones:

O Christ, thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy upon us.
O Christ, thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy upon us.
O Christ, thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
Grant us thy peace. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER at that moment ascended the pulpit, and spoke:

"Inasmuch as you are come at this time of trouble to prepare yourselves for a Christian death, hear what the word of God enjoins upon us. Death is a departure from this world and all its concerns. You should, therefore, set your houses in order before your spiritual farewell is bidden, and that to-day, for you cannot tell but what the plague may strike you down to-morrow. If you have done this, then you should cordially and sincerely, for God's sake, pardon all men, who may have injured you. Also in like manner ask the pardon of all men, of whom you have doubtless offended many, whether by a bad example in word or in deed, or by doing them less good than you were bound to do in accordance with the commandment to practice brotherly, Christian love. Do this that your souls may not be burdened with any earthly matters.

"And now direct your minds to God only, to whom you are led by the path of death. For here we pass through the strait gate and the narrow way unto life. The way is indeed narrow, but it is not long.

"The Christian's death is a new birth; and even as a woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come, but rejoiceth as soon as the man is born, just so should you consider and bear the tribulation of dying; but be assured that afterward, when through death you are born unto new life, your rejoicing will be great.

"Prepare and provide for this truly Christian journey of death and life by distinct confession and the sacrament of the holy and true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Desire it devoutly, receive it trustingly, and if death comes upon you quicker than you expected, and you cannot receive the sacrament, let your desire for it at least be great in your hearts, and fear not if you cannot obtain it. For Christ says: 'All things are possible to him that *believeth*.'

"But let him who receives the sacrament render honor to the same by believing that it is of a surety true that he obtains the forgiveness of sins.

"Do not, however, allow the terrible image of death to arise before your eyes and hearts. The closer our view and knowledge of death, the harder and more dangerous will it be to die. In *life* you are to exercise yourselves with the thoughts relating to death, and to call him toward you whilst he is still afar off; but in *dying*, when he is so all-powerfully near, it is dangerous to scan him too closely, and profits nothing; then you should drive his terrible picture from your minds,

for death has much of his power and strength in the timidity of our nature, and in the fact that we think too seriously of him *at the wrong time.*

"Sin also grows and increases in magnitude when it is contemplated too much; and hell grows and becomes larger when regarded at the wrong time. You should, therefore, not burden yourselves needlessly with these three pictures—*death, sin* and *hell*—for they assail us mightily of themselves; and if man by morbid thinking adds to their terrors, he is lost and forgets God entirely.

"You should rather contemplate and consider *death in the light of life, sin in the light of grace, and hell in the light of heaven,* and not permit yourselves to be overwhelmed.

"Do not contemplate death in itself, or in your human nature, or in those who are deprived of life by death, otherwise you will be lost. But consider death in those who have died in the grace of God, and have overcome death—looking to Christ. Then death will neither be terrible nor dreadful; for Christ is naught else than life, comfort and salvation; and blessed are they who die in the Lord Christ.

"Do not consider *sin* in sin, nor in the souls of the lost and damned, but only in the light of grace, which is Christ on the cross, who takes away your sin from you, bears it for you, and eradicates it utterly. And this you are firmly to believe, and keep before your eyes without doubting. For where sin is swallowed up in Christ, there is no longer sin. But give thanks to God, who giveth us the victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Do not contemplate *hell*, either in yourselves or in itself, or in those who are judged; for such a picture must hurl you to destruction. And it would profit you nothing to view this for a thousand years: it would still be your ruin. Rather look upon the Lord Jesus, who for your sakes is now in heaven, and who was forsaken of God like one eternally damned, saying upon the cross: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' By this picture only you will overcome hell, if you only believe that all this was done for *you*.

"Whoever among you has grace and time granted him to confess, to be absolved and receive the holy sacrament, such an one indeed has abundant cause to love God, to abound in praise and gratitude, and to die a joyful death, if he have faith in view of the sacrament. For by the sacrament, administered by the priest, your God, Christ himself, speaks to you, and you come into the true communion of saints. But if you doubt this, all is lost; for it shall be unto us, *only as we believe*.

"Therefore hold fast to this and say: 'He who has given and ever gives me his word and proof, that *Christ's* life, *Christ's* grace and *Christ's* heaven, each has made *my* sin, *my* death and *my* hell powerless to injure me,' He is God and will keep his word. If the priest has absolved me, I will rely on it as on the Word of God itself. If it is God's word, it will certainly prove true. On this I stand in life or in death. The divine sign will not deceive me, and I will not permit myself to be persuaded otherwise. I would rather deny the whole world and myself, than doubt

that my God deals uprightly and faithfully with me in these signs and assurances. Whether I be unworthy of him or not, I am a member of Christ's Church. It is better for *me* to be unworthy, than that God should not be true. Get thee hence, Satan, if thou wishest to make me believe it is not so!

"And if there should be one or more among you who would be sure or would have a sign from heaven as to his relation to God, and as to what God had determined in his case, him I now ask: What could it profit you, if you *were* to receive such a sign, and yet would not believe. Of what profit are all signs without faith? What benefit do the sacraments confer without faith?

"There is, indeed, nothing on earth that can comfort sad hearts and disturbed consciences like the holy sacraments. They are God's words, and show us Christ, and assure us of all his wealth, which is the Lord himself.

"For this reason no one whose final hour may come in this time of pestilence, should doubt that the sure sign of salvation is given to him in the sacrament.

"On your death-bed you are not alone and forsaken, but are seen of many eyes. First of all, the eye of God and of Christ himself beholds you, because you believe his word and cling to his sacrament. Then the dear angels and all the saints, that is, all faithful and true Christians, behold you; for, according to the power and essence of the holy sacrament, this is always certainly true, that all these taken together as one entire body are a part of the holy body of Jesus Christ, and that they help him to overcome sin, death and hell, and that they all carry the burden with him.

"Here the commandment of love and the communion of the saints enters upon its great work. Adhere to this steadfastly if you would have courage in death. If you fail to do so, all promised communion, all help and love, every consolation and assistance, will be wanting in your final need. Adhere to God's promise: 'I will guide thee with mine eye.' For if God sees you, that is enough, for all the angels, all the saints, all creatures, follow his glance; and if you abide in this faith they will all place their hands beneath you, and the instant your soul leaves your body they are there to receive it You *cannot* perish, for the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. They that trust in the Lord shall be a Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever.

"Be ye not afraid. Even though the pestilence from the south threatens to destroy us all, fear not, for the Lord hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; and the Lord saith: 'He hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.'

"Be not afraid; the angels of God are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. Death is a journey unto a much greater multitude, which is waiting for us, greater than that which we leave behind.

"Be not afraid. But do not presume to do such great things for God of your own strength; but hum-

bly entreat God to create and maintain such faith and understanding of his holy sacrament in you. Ascribe the honor to God with fear and humility, and call upon Christ, nothing doubting that your prayer will be heard.

"Moreover, you should pray God daily during your whole life for consolation in your last hour, and for sustaining faith. And he to whom the hour of death comes, be it to-day or to-morrow, should remind God of this prayer and of his assurance and promise.

"Then do not fear death, but rather praise and love God's grace; for the love and praise of God renders dying far more easy.

"May God help us all unto this. Amen."

And now the whole assembly fell on their knees in prayer, and sang:

"Now we implore the Holy Ghost,
For that true faith which saves the lost,
And comfort brings when death is nigh,
From sorrow leads to bliss on high.
Have mercy, Lord.

"Thou precious Light, diffuse Thy ray,
Teach Jesus Christ, the only Way;
Bind us to Him whose loving hand,
Points to the heavenly Fatherland.
Have mercy, Lord.

"Thou purest Love, Thy grace impart,
Let holy zeal inspire each heart,
That in each other we confide,
And of one mind in peace abide.
Have mercy, Lord.

"Thou Comfort in the hour of gloom,
From dread of shame and of the tomb;

Help, lest our minds sway or despair,
Before the foe's accusing power.
Have mercy, Lord."

When the congregation had finished the hymn, they remained on their knees for a time in silent prayer; then arising they left the house of God slowly and with hesitation, as if unwilling to go from the sheltering asylum out into the jaws of danger. But our soldier felt himself wondrously comforted and strengthened; he, too, hesitated to leave the place of worship, not because he feared the cruel hand of the pestilence, which might seize upon him, but because he wished in this holy place to enjoy as long as possible the lingering effects of the blissful feelings produced by the prayer, and to ponder in his heart the powerful words on preparation for death, such as only MARTIN LUTHER could give to others.

When Stephen Hesse at length perceived that he was left alone in the house of God, he proceeded to the door, where he perceived a veiled female form, cowering in the corner, who permitted him to pass without paying the slightest attention to him. The last ray of light from the altar expired, and the sanctuary was buried in gloom. The sexton began to lock the doors; but the figure did not move. Hesse now felt himself impelled by an irrepressible sympathy to approach.

"Pardon me," he said, in the earnest tone of one who feels for another. "Are you ill and too weak to leave this place alone? If so, do not refuse my aid."

"Permit me to remain here," entreated the woman.

"But you are alone," rejoined the soldier, "and the sexton will lock this last door too, directly."

"Is it not permitted," she asked, "to pass the night in the house of God?"

"O yes," replied Hesse; "but if any injury were to threaten you during the night, you would be entirely helpless."

At this the woman slowly shook her head and said: "God alone can help the dying, and here I am in his house. Go your way and leave me here."

"Not so," remonstrated the soldier with decision, now moved by profound sympathy. "You are ill, and I would be committing a grievous sin if I were to leave you. You must go with me. You *must* accept my aid."

"Do you mean to say that I must live because *you* wish it?" asked the woman bitterly. "Will you oppose yourself to the will of God?"

"God forbid," said Hesse, "but know you not this text of Scripture: 'Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God.' You are ill—that you cannot deny; if now you propose to reject the aid to which God has directed you, then you challenge God. I do not know you, and am myself but a poor preacher of repentance; yet I can tell you this: The hand of the Lord already rests heavily enough on this unhappy city. Do you desire to bring the special wrath of God upon yourself? Have you not heard from FATHER LUTHER that you should prepare your house, ere you die? Is there no one on earth whose pardon you should beg, or one who would fain hear the word of forgiveness from your lips? Do not, I implore you, tempt God."

Whilst the soldier was yet speaking, the woman be-

trayed by her movement that her heart had been touched. "You are right," she said with a despondent voice. "I forgot that I dare not die yet, because of my sins, which are not yet forgiven. And yet,"—she quickly interrupted herself in faltering tones; and as she was on the point of sinking to the ground, exclaimed, "O, help me, I die."

The soldier caught the suffering woman in his arms and held his flask to her nose, and at the same time moistened her forehead and temples with a moist sponge which he had with him as a preventive against infection.

The powerful restoratives soon revived her from her faint, and she slowly raised her head, but she lay helpless in the young man's arms.

"Come, do come," he entreated, as he led her unresistingly from the church. "May I ask who you are, and where you live?"

"Lead me to Coswig street," she replied; and piteously added, "if you sympathize with one who is most unhappy."

"I shall not leave you until I know that you are safe and under good care," replied Stephen Hesse. "But take courage. Think of what FATHER LUTHER has just spoken. 'Be ye not afraid. The right hand of the Lord can change evil into good.' Do you not feel better?"

"I am becoming stronger," she answered, "but I am still very weak. Do you know what the symptoms of the plague are?"

"No," answered Hesse, an awful shudder passing through his limbs. "But banish such thoughts from your mind. Fear induces the disease."

"I am not afraid," she answered with a bitter smile. "One to whom death is welcome, is not likely to be frightened when it comes."

"You are young," rejoined the soldier, touched by her words. "How wretched and how unhappy you must be, if you at your age desire to die! But it is not right in you to feel thus. The longer life, the more grace. May I ask what makes you so unhappy that you prefer death to life? I well know," continued the young soldier, when his companion became silent and partially withdrew herself from his arm, "I well know that it is unbecoming in me, a stranger, to ask you such questions. I assure you I have no desire to force myself into your confidence. I only thought that I might perhaps afford you a little light and comfort in your present need. Look, young woman," he proceeded, pointing to a crowd of men, who, veiled up to their eyes, and laden with bundles and packages, were silently passing along on the other side of the street; "see, all these people are fleeing from the city to escape the plague. They seek to *preserve* life, you to *lose* it."

"I only fulfil my destiny," she answered, almost defiantly.

Meanwhile a young man drew near the couple, regarding them with marked scrutiny. "God be praised!" he suddenly cried. "Have I found you at last, Catharine? For full an hour I have been running through the streets of the city, calling out your name, and inquiring for you of everybody I met; and no one had seen you. Catharine, why have you alarmed me so, by filling me with mortal anxiety for your safety? Even your father has asked for you, the first time for

so many weeks. Catharine, you have done wrong in causing us such alarm."

"Am I a child," she answered, coldly, "which may not leave the house without being under surveillance? and what right had you to track my steps?"

"You cannot frighten me off," returned the young man, who was none other than Fichtner, "by charging me with obtrusiveness for your welfare. I thank God with my whole heart that I have found you at last. Your unknown protector, to whom you have entrusted yourself, informs me only too distinctly that something must have happened to you, and that my anxiety on your account has not been without cause. Even though you may not vouchsafe me any information, yet I am heartily glad to be able to conduct you back to your father's house. Will you place the young lady under my care?" he now politely inquired of her companion, to whose arm Catharine was still clinging.

"I have no claim whatever upon this young lady," replied Stephen Hesse. "I found her in the church, where she had remained behind, and she was forced by a sudden weakness which came upon her to entrust herself to my arm. Do you wish," he asked Catharine, "to accompany this gentleman?"

"You are glad," she answered, bitterly, "to get rid of a troublesome burden."

"O no," said the soldier; "if you permit me, I will be pleased to escort you to your home. But are you not related to this gentleman? Are you not his sister or his friend? Is it not natural that you should trust him more than me, a stranger?"

"You have promised me," replied Catharine, eva-

sively, "not to leave me until I reach home in safety. My father's house is not far distant; my name is Catharine Homberger. I beg you to conduct me back to my father."

"Catharine Homberger!" cried the soldier, almost startled; "the lovely and attractive young lady on Coswig street? No—" here he quickly broke off, feeling that his surprise at the complete decay of her youthful freshness and beauty must necessarily be painful to the poor girl. "You are sick, lean on my arm; since you wish it, I will conduct you to your father's."

And so they proceeded on their way, Fichtner walking beside them in great sadness. When they had arrived at Homberger's house, Catharine called the maid, thanked in few words her escort, and immediately after proceeded to her room.

"I know you now," said Fichtner to Catharine's late companion, with whom he walked back; "you are a soldier of our most serene Elector. I was present at the Black Eagle when you recounted the glorious confession of our faith made by dear Mr. Myconius."

"And you," answered Hesse, "you are the young journeyman from Milan; now I recognize you. On that evening when you had gone to your room, Peter Schulte, the inkeeper, directed the conversation upon you, and Magister Veit Dietrich, as well as Lucas Kranach, told what they knew about you. You see that we are not such entire strangers after all; may I ask what has befallen poor Miss Catharine."

"God alone sees into her heart," answered Leonard,

"I believe that the judgment of the Lord has come upon her; but with his judgment his kingdom has come also. You said that you found her in the church alone and unprotected."

"Yes, in the church of the Augustinians," replied Hesse. "I was passing by accidentally, when I heard the sound of song and prayer within. I entered, and had the pleasure of listening to a very comforting sermon, from LUTHER'S own lips, on Christian preparation for death. She wished to spend the night in the church, and I had some difficulty in dissuading her."

"The Lord worketh in her," said Leonard, quietly, as though speaking to himself. "Thou dear, blessed mother, thy prayer and entreaty is being heard more gloriously than thou couldst anticipate."

"I should be very glad," continued Hesse, "if I could have a brief hour's talk with you to-morrow. My time is limited. To-morrow morning I must go to FATHER LUTHER, by order of my most gracions prince, to deliver an autograph letter, and, if possible, I must be back in Torgau by to-morrow evening."

"I am at your service," answered Leonard.

"I shall take lodgings at the Black Eagle," continued the other. "Come thither to-morrow morning. How glad I should be if you were to accompany me to Torgau! Are you not afraid to remain in this plague-stricken city? You have no home here—why not avoid the danger? Go with me to Torgau."

"'Tis true I have no home here," rejoined Fichtner; "but I came not of my own accord. The Lord of heaven sent me hither; I must remain."

"And you are not afraid of being stricken down by the pestilence?" asked Hesse.

"No," answered Fechtner, calmly; "even should the plague attack me, yet would I not die. That which the Lord has sent me here for is not yet finished. God's will cannot contradict itself. I must stay here until he bids me go."

"I do not know your secret, of course," said Hesse; "but I plainly perceive that Miss Catharine has her share in it. But you have an honest look, and I warrant me there is no wrong connected with your affair. Remain, then, in the line of duty marked out by you, and may God take you under his own holy and gracious protection!"

Thus the two young men parted, each one going his own way.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE POST OF DANGER.

"Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." Exodus xx. 20.

LUTHER had just left his work, and gone down to the sitting-room for a little recreation, and was fondling and kissing little Hans, when his servant, Wolff, announced the arrival of Melanchthon and Justus Jonas.

"How fares the poor girl?" inquired LUTHER of his servant.

"Doctor Schurff thinks there is hope," answered Wolff. "The sores are suppurating, and the fever has slightly abated."

"God's gracious will be done to the poor girl!" continued LUTHER. "I trust she receives every care and attention."

"Yes, doctor," replied Wolff; "but she seems to need nothing but water, for she drinks almost incessantly."

"Tell her," said the kindly LUTHER, "that I shall soon come to quicken her with a word of comfort."

The servant left the room, and the two professors, Melanchthon and Jonas, entered.

"You are going to take leave of us?" LUTHER cried out to them.

"Certainly," answered Melanchthon. "His electoral highness insists that we, together with the students,

move to Jena, to escape the plague; and we shall, if possible, take our departure to-day. It is hard for me, dear doctor, to leave you here in the infected city."

"And why?" asked LUTHER promptly. "It is not well for us clergymen and pastors to be so anxious concerning the life and health of our bodies. I have been informed that timid people refuse to hold intercourse with good Mr. Peters, the deacon, because he visited the plague-stricken, and comforted them with God's word, as his office requires of him. Can you believe it, gentlemen, that they have in right earnest requested Mr. Peters not to appear in public among the people."

"The fear of death is certainly great, and makes the heart timid," replied Justus Jonas.

"And the danger which results from fear is still greater. Would to God, that this were my greatest care: then would I be out of danger. I shall proclaim from the pulpit that Mr. Peters is not to be interfered with. If we give way to such childish fear, there will soon be such faint-heartedness in our community, that every one who but feels the least weakness, will imagine it to be the plague."

"But," remarked Melanchthon, "it can not be denied, that a faithful and conscientious pastor is more exposed to the danger of infection than all others—yea, even more than the doctor of medicine."

"I will not deny it," said LUTHER. "The physician of the soul must come closer to the sick than the physician of the body, and the medicine of the soul requires more time in its preparation than the medicine prepared in the pharmacy; and where in the

greatest extremity the physician of the body stays away because his efforts are of no avail, there the pastor's work really begins in earnest. But all this amounts to nothing. God takes the ministers of the Word under his special care, unless they are presumptuous and venture into danger unnecessarily. There is no trouble to be feared in hearing confession. We carry the word of *life* with us: why should we be afraid of death?"

"There is one thing I wonder at now," said Justus Jonas. "Formerly, whilst popery still ruled this city, there were great and dangerous diseases; but then the people were not so fearful as now, when one should think that the light of the gospel must have taught them something better."

"*I* do not wonder at it," said LUTHER; "in popish times the people relied on the merits and holy works of monks and priests, and thought themselves safe in view of such things. Now, indeed, they have found out that every one must look to himself, that he may obtain faith and strength; and before any one learns to rely on the Lord Jesus alone, time and adversity are necessary, for prosperity seldom succeeds in effecting it."

"How well it would be," observed Melanchthon, "if we could drive this fear out of the people! Doctor Schurff told me that, as late as yesterday, two persons, husband and wife, died more from fear and dread than from the pestilence."

"Let us admonish the populace as persistently as we can," cried LUTHER. "Let no one be allowed to make an outcry, and spread discouraging rumors respecting

the plague. Let us teach the community to be of good cheer in the Lord, and to trust in him, and to continue, each and every one, to pursue their ordinary avocations, and not to desert their neighbor when he needs aid and attention. Let us tell them seriously that a Christian must not fear death, inasmuch as he has the word of life, and has by faith laid hold on the Lord of life, who has overcome death for our well being."

"But," objected Melanchthon, "you have told us yourself, *Domine Doctor*, that even a clergyman is not to court danger unnecessarily. Permit me then to remind you of this. You are too philanthropic to think of yourself and your health. I must repeat it, my heart is heavily burdened at the thought of leaving you alone in Wittenberg."

"Do not be anxious on my account, dear Philip," said LUTHER, smiling calmly; "if the Lord will protect and preserve me, he may do it one place as well as another. How could I leave Wittenberg even if I would? My dear Catharine is far from well; Martha, the servant girl, has been seized with the plague; my dear little Hans does not feel much inclined to be up since yesterday. I am personally not yet restored to full vigor from my late severe illness; our flight would abound in more danger than our tarrying here. Besides, it will be necessary to confort the sick and dying with the Word of God."

"But that really does not belong to your office, dear Doctor," urged Jonas, by way of objection. "Doctor Pommer, the pastor, with his two deacons, is determined to remain."

"Be it so," replied LUTHER. "The care of souls cannot well be pursued on too large a scale. Depart, dear friends, with God to protect you; and may you return preserved from all harm, when the Lord has delivered us from his wrath. I, for my part, do not fear that the plague will increase or remain with us very long."

Wolff, LUTHER'S servant, again entered and announced a messenger from the Elector, with instructions to deliver a missive personally and to bring back an answer.

Stephen Hesse, the young soldier, now stepped into the room, and with a most reverential bow handed LUTHER a letter, besides presenting the special oral greeting of the Elector.

The letter was brief and to the point. LUTHER read it in a moment. "His grace means well with me," he remarked calmly: "I am ordered to go with you to Jena, dear friends."

"And will you not comply with this most gracious order?" asked Melanchthon. "Will you not accept it as a sign that you are under *obligation* to flee from danger for the sake of our cause?"

"Our most gracious Elector," answered LUTHER, "is a dear, pious sovereign, who does God's will cheerfully whenever he knows it to be such; but he is nevertheless a human being like ourselves, and with us subject to the command of God. How now, dear sirs, if I tell you that a Christian *dare* not flee from the danger of death? For what is death? What is the pestilence which has come upon us? I look upon it as nothing else than a judgment of God, sent upon us because of our sins. In such case, a Christian must

endure, and patiently and trustingly kiss the rod which the just and gracious God has raised over him. Would it not, then, be wrong and exhibit a want of faith in God to desire to flee from the hand of the Lord?"

"And do you, then, by this sentiment," asked Jonas, in a tone of deep concern, "pronounce judgment on us because we wish to flee from the danger?"

"No, dear Jonas," answered LUTHER. "Your office binds you to the University; but if the University itself leaves, and does so by order of the Elector, you are bound not to let the students depart unaccompanied by you. If the whole congregation of Wittenberg were to flee, then the pastors dare not remain. But whoever wishes to remain, ought not to be blamed, for he surely has a good cause and a strong faith."

"Such a faith is not given to all," rejoined Melanchthon.

"Yes, for it is no milk-and-water faith," said LUTHER. "And I do not feel like censuring him who has it not. Do we not know that even the most faithful and believing Christians, who otherwise took their cross on themselves willingly to follow the Lord Jesus, have felt, and still feel, a horror at the prospect of death? Who, therefore, would not praise those who are so minded that they do not greatly regard death, and willingly submit to the chastisement of God?"

"Do you not think it possible," asked Jonas, "that this might be done, not through the exercise of faith, but to tempt God?"

"Certainly," replied LUTHER. "As there are always fewer strong than weak, it would not be just for us to lay the same burden on all. He that is strong in the

faith can drink poison without sustaining injury, as the Lord himself bears witness; but he that is weak in the faith imbibes death in a single drop. Peter could walk on the sea as long as he was strong in faith, but sank as soon as he doubted and became weak. Now if one strong in faith walk with one who is weak, he must, of course, be careful not to put forth all his strength, or he would soon walk the weak man to death."

"That is a very comforting doctrine," said Melanchthon.

"Because it is St. Paul's doctrine;" added LUTHER. "For, if the apostle speaks of himself primarily: 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves;' or, 'the members of the body, which seem to us the weakest, are the most necessary,'—he shows us plainly that Christ will not have his weak ones rejected."

"There exists then," said Melanchthon, "here, as in all things, no fixed rule, which admits of the same force and application for all persons."

"Yes, thus it is," answered LUTHER. "A man can do both, he can both die and flee from death, in two ways. First, it may be done clearly and distinctly *against* the command of God. For example, if one were in prison because of his faith, and he should escape from impending death by denying God's Word or retracting, he would act against the will of God, and commit a sin. For Christ says: 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.' And elsewhere he enjoins upon us: 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.'"

"This saying," observed Melanchthon, meditatively, "is certainly a lofty wall for clergymen and pastors, over which they can not easily pass."

"Preachers and pastors," added LUTHER quickly, "and all who are in the office of the ministry, are certainly under obligation to remain under all visitations which threaten death. Here is a clear injunction of Christ: 'The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep, but he that is a hireling, seeth the wolf coming and fleeth.' Now the wolf may be the pestilence, which is ready to destroy the poor people. For just in such unusual and terrible straits the sick and dying are most in need of spiritual aid. Here only God's word and the holy sacraments can strengthen and comfort the consciences, so that they may overcome death by faith. A pastor who avoids a sick person, because he fears for his own life, and denies him consolation from the Word of God, is a hireling."

"But might it not happen," observed Jonas, "in case of unusually great mortality, that all faithful pastors would die off in a short time, and the unfortunate people then be without comforters?"

"That might readily happen," rejoined LUTHER; "therefore, it seems to me that in places where there are several ministers, these should agree to have a few of their number stay at a distance from the pestilence, and not endanger themselves until a further and more pressing necessity arises. For if the duties of the office are otherwise well attended to, and those who remain willingly and gladly minister, it may be done without sin."

"St. Anastasius did the same," said Melanchthon;

"we read that he fled from his church in a time of great mortality to save his life, because there were many others who wished to remain for the purposes of the ministry."

"The same happened in the life of St. Paul," added Jonas; "the brethren at Damascus let him down over the wall in a basket, that he might escape. And in the tumult at Ephesus he allowed himself to be dissuaded by the disciples from going among the populace and placing his life in danger, because this was not necessary."

"But how do you take it to be," asked Melanchthon, "with those who hold secular offices?"

"All these," answered LUTHER, promptly, "are bound to remain. For here again we have God's word, which institutes the secular governments and commands them to govern city and country, to protect the people and administer the laws. Government is the handmaid of God; it can and dare not flee from the distinct commands of God. It is a very great sin to leave in danger, without a head and a government, a whole community which mayor and judges are commanded to provide for; be it in a time of insurrection, of distress by fire, or water, or by pestilence, and tribulation of any kind. For where there is no order and government, the devil has free scope. And St. Paul says, concerning all persons, whether they hold spiritual or secular office, 'If any provide not for his own, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.'"

"That strength, too, is of course not given to all," said Melanchthon.

"Well," added LUTHER, "if they *must* flee in time

of danger, out of great weakness, because they have not the courage to remain, they *may* do it without sin, if they only put satisfactory administrators in their place, that the community be well provided for and protected, and if they dililgently inquire and see to it that all is done well."

"But who is really without an office of some kind or other?" asked Jonas; "we are *all* ministers, and every one is bound to some duty."

"The text, therefore, applies to all," said LUTHER; "whoever is bound to another by service or duty, will find in the Word of God the precept which directs him. A servant is not to flee from his master, nor a maid from her mistress, without their knowledge and consent. And the sin would be equally great were master or mistress to desert their servants in the hour of distress and danger, without carefully providing for them. The same holds good in regard to parents and children, physicians and city officials, and all who are serving for pay; these must not and dare not flee, except they place capable and acceptable persons in their stead. Yes," added LUTHER, "not even a neighbor may leave another when there is no one else at hand to care for the sick person. In all these cases the words of Christ are to be carefully regarded, '*I was sick and ye visited me not.*' Our Lord means by this to sum up all the various duties of mutuality—that all are bound to one another, that no one is to desert the other in his distress, and that we all reciprocally owe one another aid, counsel and help in all things and under all circumstances."

"Look at our position, dear doctor," now said Jonas.

"May not these solemn words of the Lord apply to us also, since *we* are fleeing from Wittenberg in the time of distress and danger?"

"You are not fleeing, Jonas, but are going whither His Electoral Highness directs you. Your wards go with you: the shepherds accompany the flock. You have a good Christian right to go, for it is not necessary for you to remain here. On the whole, I take it that every one who does not sin as to his office, may either flee or remain without burdening his conscience. Is there any one bold and strong in faith? in God's name let him remain: even if death mows down his sheaves at his side to the right and left, he surely does not sin, for he stands and falls in God. But if one is weak and timid, in God's name let him flee. To flee from death and to save our life is implanted in our nature by God, and is not forbidden, if it only is not to the distrust of God, and to the injury of our neighbor; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh and blood, but, on the contrary, nourisheth and cherisheth it. Yea, more than this, it is even enjoined on every one to take care of his own body and life, and so far as lies in his power, not bring them into danger and harm. For this, as the same apostle bears witness, God has set in order the members of our body, that each is constantly to care and work for the other."

"It seems to me," said Melanchthon, "that the care for these things is included in the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer."

"You are perfectly right, my dear brother," continued LUTHER. "When we beseech and pray: 'Give us our daily bread,'—this certainly means: Lord bless

the work of our hands, which we perform in the sweat of our brow, in order that we may have our bodily food, clothing, and all we need, and that we may avoid harm and danger, wherever we can, so far as we do not sin against the love we owe our neighbor. And it is certainly more reasonable to endeavor to preserve life and flee from death, where this can be done without imperilling or injuring our neighbor, for on this the whole matter depends. The Lord Jesus himself says that the body and the life are more than meat and raiment. But if there is any one so *strong* in faith as willingly and gladly to endure exposure, hunger and distress, and is not afraid of death, and does all this without tempting God, and prefers to remain in danger rather than to work his way out even if he could, let him remain; but he must not condemn those who do not or are unable to do the same."

"This opinion of yours is very pleasant to me," said Melanchthon, "for although I am aware that you, dear doctor, judge our departure mildly, and from Christian love to your neighbor represent our step as an act of obedience to his Grace the Elector, yet I also know that your judgment and advice is always based on the word of God, and that you would condemn us were Holy Scripture to do so."

"How could I do otherwise, dear Philip?" replied LUTHER; "but to show you that from love to you I do not twist God's word as the fanatics and sacramentarians do, I will remind you of a few examples in Scripture. Abraham was a great saint, the latchet of whose shoes we three together are not worthy to unloose; yet he feared death, and influenced by that fear,

he even represented his wife, Sarah, as his sister. But as he did this without detriment or injury to his neighbor, it was not imputed to him for sin. And his son, Isaac, acted in the same way. Moreover, Jacob fled from his brother, Esau, that he might not be killed by him. David fled from Saul and Absalom. The prophet Urijah fled from King Jehoiakim into Egypt, although this did not save him from death. And even Elijah, who in the power of his faith could cause the priests of Baal to be slain, was afraid of Queen Jezebel, and fled into the desert when she had caused his life to be threatened. Yea, even Moses fled into the land of Midian when the King of Egypt searched for him. All these fled from death to save their lives, yet without causing detriment or danger to their neighbor, and after they had accomplished what they were in duty bound to do."

"These examples," objected Jonas, "may not be able to put fully at ease a solicitous mind, which fears to transgress God's word in the smallest matter, particularly in our present flight from the pestilence. None of those men fled from a pestilence, which you yourself, Doctor MARTIN, regard as a deserved punishment of God, to be endured with patience; but they all fled from death, which persecution and the enmity of the wicked had prepared for them."

"Dear Jonas," answered LUTHER, "do not burden yourself needlessly. Death is death, come how it may. In the Holy Writ God himself mentions the four plagues or judgments which he permits to come upon the world, viz: *pestilence, hunger, the sword, and wild beasts.* If a Christian may flee from either of these

four plagues, why not from *all the four?* The instances which I have cited from Scripture show how the holy fathers fled from the *sword.* Abraham and Jacob *fled from the other plague*—famine—which drove them to Egypt. Why should not a man flee with a good conscience from wild beasts? Do you think, brother Jonas, that if the Turk should come into a village that no one would dare to escape, but must await the punishment of God by the sword? Well, yes. Let him who is strong in faith wait, but he should not condemn those who take flight."

"The word of God," now said Melanchthon, "cannot and should not bind consciences so fixedly, else no one would be allowed to escape from a burning house—no one in danger of drowning might strike out to save his life; because fire and water are also divine punishments, which we are to accept in patience."

"Let him who thinks it right do so," added LUTHER, "but he should not tempt God by his deed. He should allow others to do what they can. Every sickness is a punishment from God, and all other evils which befall us are God's judgments. Would we let the word of God urge us thus, we should be compelled to omit the seventh petition of the Lord's prayer, and no longer pray, '*Deliver us from evil. Amen.*' For evils are also God's chastisements; and we would no longer be permitted to pray against hell, nor to avoid it, for hell is a supreme punishment from God. But what would be the result of this?"

"And what is the true meaning of the Word of God respecting this petition?"

"It is this," was LUTHER'S prompt reply: "we are

to pray against all evil, and also take every precaution; but to be careful not to commit manifest sin against God. If God desires to visit us with his displeasure, all our precaution will be of no avail."

"Many inquiries," continued Jonas, "have been addressed to me by conscientious pastors, as to whether the Word of God permitted them to think of saving their lives during this time of pestilence. And you, dear Doctor, have, as I well know, been overrun with such inquiries. Now, since you are determined to remain here in Wittenberg, whilst your office also binds you to the students who go to Jena with us, you are well aware that your example will be an accusation against all who depart."

"Not so, dear brother," was LUTHER'S kindly rejoinder; "the dear Lord has bound me to the city of Wittenberg. I must remain here, even though a thousand fall at my right hand, and a thousand at my left. I *must* stay here, to serve my neighbor. And if you desire to know how I treated this matter before the Lord, I will tell you. I committed myself to the Lord, and said to him: '*Lord, I am in thy hand, thou hast bound me to this place: thy will be done, for I am thy poor creature; thou canst destroy and thou canst preserve me here in this pestilence, just as well as if I were in the midst of fire, water, hunger, or other danger.*' Naught else do I need, and I am fully satisfied with this."

"Yes, Doctor," said Jonas, "but not all are as strong in faith as you."

"Well," continued LUTHER, kindly, "for those who are not bound and can flee, yourself and Master Philip for instance, I have a little prayer too—it is this:

'Lord God, I am too weak and timid, therefore I flee from the danger, and try to guard myself against it as much as I can. But I am, nevertheless, Lord, in thy hands, in this and in every trouble which may befall me. Thy will be done. For my flight will not affect it, since evil and tribulation are everywhere. The devil is not idle, and does not sleep, but is a murderer from the beginning.'

"A pastor," LUTHER went on to say, when his friends remained in silence: "*A pastor without faith is a miserable creature indeed;* he resembles a light, without tallow or wax, where nothing but the wick burns, which will soon die out. If my neighbor's house is on fire, love bids me hasten and assist in extinguishing it. He who will not aid his neighbor in danger until he can do it without risking or injuring his own property and body, will *never* help him. For there will never be such a thing as help in distress, where some detriment, or personal loss by neglect, or danger and injury, would not be possible. If one did not render such assistance to his neighbor, but were to forsake him in distress, he would be a murderer in the sight of God, as St. John bears witness: 'He who does not love his brother is a murderer.' And elsewhere: 'But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' Christ will condemn as murderers all who act thus, and the timid preachers and pastors first of all, when he shall say: 'I was sick and ye visited me not.' And this applies not only to those called as pastors, but to all members of the congregation, who do not

visit their sick neighbors and proffer them assistance. What will be the lot of those who desert their unfortunate brethren, and let them die like dogs? Yea, how will they fare, who even deprive the poor of their goods, and load them with burdens? This is the way in which the tyrants are now treating the poor people who receive the gospel. But let them go—they are judged already."

During this conversation, whilst LUTHER was becoming more and more earnest as one word followed another, the physician, Dr. Schurff, accompanied by LUTHER'S wife, had entered the room. LUTHER now turned to the physician, and said: "Dr. Augustine, I hope you bring me the glad news that the poor girl will recover?"

"As yet the heavenly Physician is the only one who knows," answered Schurff. "The fever is certainly moderating; but it is my painful duty to tell you that your other servant girl has just taken to her bed, and your faithful Wolff is also moving about suspiciously."

"Dear Doctor," added Madame Luther, "you know that I willingly and gladly submit myself to God in life and in death; but as we now have three sick persons in the house, I am beginning to feel somewhat concerned for you and your dear little Hans, lest the pestilence claim you, too, as its victims."

"And you do not think of yourself, dear Kate?" asked LUTHER; "Were I to allow anxiety and fear to arise within me, it would be on your account and that of the child; but I do not permit myself to be alarmed, either on my own account, or because of you or of the child. It seems as though all that I hold dear in this

world has conspired to tempt me, whether I will stand or fall before my Lord. Philip and Jonas would persuade me to leave; his grace the Elector, and you, too, dear Katy, wish me to go away. Could I depart, it would be because of you; but as the Lord fills my heart with peace and hope on your account especially, we will leave matters as they are. I shall remain in my dear Wittenberg, and assist the congregation in bearing its burden."

"But you have," said the physician, "your special burden already. You have the plague-stricken in your own house, for I am obliged to inform you your manservant has been attacked by the plague. Will you not at least have these sick conveyed to the general hospital? You have scarcely any one to attend to the wants of the poor patients, except your amanuensis, Mr. Dietrich, yourself, and your dear wife."

"Katy," said LUTHER, turning to his wife more seriously than heretofore, "Katy, have you agreed with Doctor Augustine in this matter?"

"No, my dear husband," she replied, the color rising in her cheeks. "Doctor Schurff, indeed, thought it necessary on your account; but I at once said that I would leave the decision to my dear husband. I would not like to leave those in distress who have served me in the time of need."

"Well, dear Kate," said LUTHER, pleasantly and heartily, "the Lord has spoken this through you, and gives me a new proof that you are my wife, given to me by God. I feel as though my conscience would not permit me to pray, if I were to thrust my poor servants out of my house in their present distress."

The physician, however, did not give up. He continued: "But it might be done without burdening your conscience. If the servants themselves desire to be taken to the hospital, where they would be well and faithfully cared for, and you yourself, dear doctor, could visit them unhindered as often as you wish, to provide them with spiritual consolation, then your conscience might remain at ease."

"That may be," replied LUTHER; "but our good city of Wittenberg is not any too well supplied with hospitals and charitable institutions for such unusual mortality, and it is but fair that the poor enjoy the benefit of these institutions before others. It is not becoming in the pastor to usurp the place of the needy in the congregation. No, dear Katy," he again addressed himself to his wife, "there is nothing left for us but to act as hospital attendants and nurses ourselves in this time of distress. I stick to the text, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' and 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.'"

"Who can oppose you, doctor?" exclaimed the physician, with cordial respect. "You always strike with the word of God, and opposition can accomplish nothing. O that you could but cry out thus to those who are escaping from the city in great fear and anxiety, and for that very reason are often attacked by the plague on the highway!"

"The pestilence comes not without God's permission," was LUTHER'S rejoinder. "But where such unwonted mortality appears, it becomes clearly our duty to remain, to keep our minds calm, and especially to ponder the fact that we have been so linked to-

gether by God himself that we dare not desert one another."

"O, that I had your faith!" now exclaimed Veit Dietrich, who had entered unnoticed and had stood silently beside the young officer.

Thereupon LUTHER turned kindly to his amanuensis, and said: "Dear Veit, *my faith may be had very easily;* I have taken it out of God's word, and man can never to the end of time exhaust this fountain. Cling closely to this thought—that this extraordinary mortality has been sent to us as a judgment of God, not only to punish sinners, but especially to test our *faith* and our *love;* our *faith*, that we may see and learn how we should act toward God, and our *love* that we may see how we should behave toward our neighbor."

"How *can* such awful mortality come into the world?" exclaimed his wife.

"That is an inquiry into the secret counsels of God," answered LUTHER. "Scripture indeed teaches us that it is a punishment of God, but does not explain its origin. For my part, I believe that all pestilences are introduced among mankind by the evil spirits, who poison the air with their evil breath, and in this way force the deadly poison into the body of man. But be that as it may, pestilence is ordained by God as a punishment for our sin, to which we are to submit patiently, and to serve our neighbor at the risk of our lives, otherwise I could not understand the precept of St. John: He laid down his life *for us:* and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the *brethren.*"

"You depict the Christian in his perfect form," ob-

jected the physician. "But how many there are, who are unable to refrain from a feeling of dread and aversion toward the sick, particularly the plague-stricken!"

"Let such only take courage and strengthen and comfort themselves," replied LUTHER. "But this must be done by not doubting that it is the devil, who excites such aversion and fear and dread in their hearts. The devil's wickedness consists in this, that he not only endeavors unceasingly to kill and destroy us, but that he also takes pleasure in making us timid and faint-hearted unto death; so that death may be as bitter as possible, or that life may afford neither rest nor peace, and that he may thus thrust us out of this life in shame and disgrace; he would make us despair before God by this course, he would make us unwilling and unprepared to die, and in the midst of such fear and care, as in a dark, awful storm, cause us to forget and lose *Christ our light and our life*, and forsake our neighbor in distress, and thus sin against God and man. That would be the devil's delight and joy. But since we know that all this dread and timidity is the devil's sport, we should for this very reason have less to do with it, and take special courage in defiance of him, and hurl his terrors back upon him, as we ward them off from ourselves.

"Dear gentlemen," continued LUTHER, with enthusiasm, his face lit up with a temporary effulgence, "prayer is a glorious armor. I am a poor, sinful man, like yourselves, and, with St. Paul, I say: 'Who is weak, and I am not weak?' When Martha, our poor servant girl, lay on her bed of suffering, covered with virulent eruptions, the devil would have

driven me away from her with his terrors had I not said: 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Just because it provokes you, I will the rather approach my sick neighbor, in defiance of you, to help him. I will pay no attention to you, and will boast of two things against you. The first is, that I know of a surety that this work of love to our neighbor, in obedience to his will, as a true service of God, pleases God and all the angels; and particularly, because you dislike it so much and oppose it so bitterly, then it must, indeed, be specially agreeable to God. How willingly and gladly I would do this if it were to please but *one angel*, who, beholding me, would rejoice over me because of my deed. But now since it pleases *my Lord Jesus Christ* and the *entire heavenly host*, and is the will and command of God, my Father, why should thy terror move me to prevent such joy in heaven, such delight of my Lord, and give *you* an opportunity to laugh and mock at me? Not so; you shall not accomplish your design. Christ shed his blood for me, and tasted death in my behalf: why should I not encounter a little danger for his sake, and why should I hesitate to face a pestilence rendered impotent by his almighty power? If you can *terrify*, my Christ is able to *strengthen*. If you can *kill*, Christ can *give life*. If you have poison, Christ the Lord hath the antidote. Should not my dear Christ, with his commands, with his benefits, and with his words of consolation, amount to more in my heart than you, Satan, with your false terror in my false flesh? May God forbid that you should influence me! Get thee hence, Satan! Christ is here, and I am his servant in this work. He alone shall direct and control it. Amen."

LUTHER now paused, and suddenly sank from this burst of animation into the greatest prostration, so that he dropped into a chair completely exhausted. All his friends, and especially Doctor Schurff and Dame Luther, hastened to him with anxious inquiries respecting his condition.

"Give yourselves no anxiety," he said with a smile, motioning them away. "I feel well enough. You know the words: 'The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak.' It would be my heart's desire to contend and to wrestle; but this poor body, which the roaring blasts have handled so roughly for so many weeks and months, has not yet recovered its wonted powers. I am getting better already. Dear Katy, if you were to favor me with a small cup of wine, that would greatly refresh and strengthen me."

Madame Katy immediately left the room to fulfill her husband's desire.

"Only remain, dear friends and gentlemen," he called out to the assembled guests, as they made ready to leave. "Stay a little longer. You know you are going up to Jena to-day, and I still have so much on my heart which I would like to tell you. Besides, I expect the dear pastor, Doctor Pommer, with his two deacons, and I would prefer to have you present at our pastoral conference. Take a little refreshment before you leave, and you, too, Mr. Soldier, above all. You know I have to trouble you with a reply for our most gracious Elector."

CHAPTER XX.

LUTHER'S GOOD COUNSEL.

"Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." 2 Tim. ii. 1–3.

AFTER LUTHER and his guests had partaken of refreshment, he turned to the lieutenant with the question: "What is your name, my good friend?" When the latter answered that his name was Stephen Hesse, LUTHER inquired further: "Mayhap you are a relative of the worthy pastor at Breslau, Doctor John Hesse?"

"He is my uncle," replied the lieutenant.

"In him you have a good example," said LUTHER, "the merciful God has so richly endowed him with all understanding and truth in Christ, that I am surprised at his applying to me for counsel. In case you should write to your uncle shortly, you may tell him that I have received his communication, and that I would have replied long ago if the almighty Lord had not for some time past kept me under severe discipline and chastisement, so that I could read and write but little. In Breslau, too, the awful plague has begun its work, and men there are thinking of flight, even more than here at Wittenberg. The pastors at that place are put to a severe test."

"They are put to a harder test than soldiers," an-

swered the soldier, blushing at the boldness of his remark.

"How do you mean?" asked LUTHER, kindly.

"Soldiers as well as pastors," continued Hesse; "in the midst of life are in death; but they can defend themselves, and may possibly overcome their enemy: but pastors who aid the plague-stricken with spiritual comfort, stand at their posts without armor, whether shield or sword, and cannot prevent the pestilence from seizing them."

"By no means, my young friend," responded LUTHER, heartily; "you are under a wrong impression; no people in the world have a more perfect coat of mail or a stronger shield than pastors; for they have the strengthening promises of God, with which he clothes and sustains all who assist the poor and needy. Do you not remember the words of the psalmist: 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness'—that is, thou changest his sick-bed into a bed of health. And are not these glorious and mighty promises of God lavished in rich measure upon all who help the needy, the sick, and the dying? What then could move a believing Christian with terror in view of so great aid and comfort from God?"

"You are right in saying the *believing* Christian," observed the physician, "the unbeliever has neither sword, nor shield, nor coat of mail. But still, although

I am a physician and ought to speak for my profession, I must in all sincerity confess that I regard a pastor or any other Christian friend and neighbor who, in time of trouble or danger, has pity on his fellow-men, more highly, and deem him possessed of greater courage, than the physician who becomes used to these things, and is brought into daily contact with them."

"Do not place yourself on too low a level," rejoined LUTHER; "I would have no physician at my bedside who did not fear God and trust the heavenly Physician more than himself. The true physician also drives away fear by the Word of God. Our pastoral service to the sick and dying is poor, and of little account compared with the mighty promises and rewards of God. Godliness is, indeed, profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Godliness is nothing else than the service of God, and the service of God is found wherever one's neighbor is served. Besides, experience proves that those who serve their neighbor with love and earnest devotion are usually preserved from danger and harm. Of coarse when one waits on a sick person, moved by avarice or the hope of obtaining an inheritance, and thus selfishly seeks his own profit in his labor of love, it is no wonder if he dies before he obtains possession of the coveted wealth."

"Do you mean by that," asked the physician, "that no one should accept a renumeration for his attendance on the sick?"

"O no," answered LUTHER. "Every laborer is of course worthy of his hire; but he should not do his work for the sake of the hire, but because of the com-

forting promises of God. For only in this way does he obtain the comforting knowledge that he too shall be cared for in evil times. God himself will be his attendant and his physician. O," continued LUTHER, his eyes brilliant with that splendor which always shone forth from them when his whole soul was full of God, his Saviour, "O what an attendant and what a physician! Dear gentlemen and friends, what are physicians, and friends, and attendants, compared with God! Should this not encourage us to visit the sick and to serve them though a hundred pestilences were raging? What are pestilences and even devils, compared with God, who has obligated himself to be the attendant and physician of those who do his will! Shame on that wretched unbelief which despises such a wealth of consolation, and permits itself to be frightened by a petty uncertain danger more than it allows itself to be strengthened by such sure, divine and faithful promises. What would it profit if scores of physicians were present, and the whole world were in attendance, if God were absent? And again, what would be the harm, if the whole world deserted us and no physicians remained with us, if only God stood by our bedsides with his glorious promises? Do you not think, dear friends, that we would then be surrounded by thousands of angels, watching over us, enabling us to trample the pestilence under foot?"

"Yes," said Melanchthon, "it is written: 'God shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot.'"

"You are right, my dear Philip," added LUTHER, affectionately. "You also have the word in readiness when and where it is needed. Therefore, dear friends, let us not be so timid as to forsake our friends whom we are bound to serve. Let us not flee so basely, driven by the devil's terrors, causing him to rejoice and mock, whilst God, with all his angels, is displeased; for he who despises such rich promises and precepts of God, and deserts his friends in need, is guilty of breaking all the commandments of God, and will be deemed a murderer of his deserted neighbor. And then I fear that these promises will be changed into cruel threatenings, and the psalm will read: 'Unhappy is he who does not consider the poor, but flees from him and forsakes him. The Lord, in like manner, will *not* deliver him in the time of trouble, nor keep him alive, and he will *not* bless him upon the earth, but will deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will *not* strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, nor make all his bed in his sickness. For with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again. This is something terrible to hear, still more terrible to expect, and most terrible to experience. For what will follow when God withdraws his hand from us and forsakes us? Naught but evil of every kind. This must happen to every one who neglects his neighbor in time of need."

"My profession," now observed the physician, "often brings me in contact with much poverty and misery, where the bodily destitution is often greater that the spiritual. The rich, the distinguished, the mighty, still have helpers and friends in all times of

distress, to nurse and serve them: even though it be only for the sake of remuneration, or because they are under obligation to serve, yet the man of importance has the benefit of it. But matters must come to a critical pass ere the rich and distinguished man approaches the bedside of the poor."

"God knows it is so," added LUTHER. "I know that if Christ or his mother were sick with the plague, the rich and the mighty ones of the earth would be pious enough to desire to act as servants to *them*, and every one would be bold and courageous, without fear or constraint. None would think of running away; but all would come running up from every side. The blind fools! They would do that for *Christ*, and hear not this same Christ, when he says: 'What ye do unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye do unto me.' Has not this very Christ given the new commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' as well as the first, which commands us to love God? Now, if the two mean the same thing, are we not plainly taught that everything which we do or not from love to our neighbor is equivalent to having done it or not from love to God? Let him who wishes to serve Christ go to his poor, sick neighbor, and serve *him*, and he will surely find that he is serving Christ; not, indeed, Christ in his own person, but in his representative. On the other hand, whenever any one refuses to serve his neighbor, he may rest assured that he would permit Christ himself to languish in distress were he present in the body. Yea, my friends, here you have the human heart with its insincere thoughts, with its unprofitable conceits—all falsehoods, and nothing but falsehoods."

"Dear husband," objected Madame Katy, "could not a person go too far in his love toward his neighbor, and tempt God more than he trusts him? Do you not regard it as Christian to think of one's self to some extent?"

"Certainly, dear Katy," was LUTHER'S kindly reply. "We can sin toward the right and toward the left. He who tempts God by foolhardiness and by neglecting to guard against the pestilence, and who undervalues medical remedies, and does not avoid plague-stricken cities and houses and persons, but who mingles and carouses with any and every one, and wishes by this to show his boldness, possibly saying to himself: 'The plague is from God: if God will protect me, he will do it without medicine or precaution on my part,'—any one who acts in this way does not trust in God, but sins against God; for God himself has laid the foundation of medicine, and has given reason to man, to watch over the body and to care for himself, that he may continue in health and strength. Any one who disdains to use due precaution and care respecting himself, when it is in his power to do so without injury to his neighbor, neglects his body, and had better be on his guard, lest he be found a destroyer of his own life in the sight of God."

"With equal reason," observed Melanchthon, "one might be perfectly unconcerned about food and drink, clothing and shelter, and think in his heart, If God will defend me against hunger and frost, he can easily do this without food and clothing."

"And this is not all," continued LUTHER, "whoever neglects his own body and blood so sinfully, and does

not aid in checking the pestilence to the best of his ability, poisons and murders others, who would in all likelihood have remained alive, if he had cared for his body as he should have done. Such an one is a two-fold murderer before God. Such people are like those who might witness the burning of a house in a city, and would not extend a helping hand, but permit the fire to spread and involve the whole city in destruction, saying: 'If God so desires, he will preserve the city without water and without efforts to extinguish the fire.' This would not be right, dear Kate; you must take medicine which Dr. Augustine has recommended as a safeguard against infection; take whatever will do you good, fumigate the house, and do not enter the presence of the sick girls until they need you. God's guardian angels are always with those who practice Christian charity. Act as one who would aid in quenching a great conflagration. The plague is nothing but a fire; not, indeed, a devourer of wood and straw, but of body and strength."

A brief pause ensuing, Dr. Schurff, the physician, took up the subject and said: "I am obliged to complain of horrible carelessness and superstition on the part of our townsfolk, who, it seems to me, sin as much and even more than those who desert their neighbors in distress. First I mention those who by God's grace have recovered from the pestilence, and who, although they are aware that others are endangered by their breath and the exhalations from their bodies, nevertheless venture right among the people without any necessity, and occasion thereby much unnecessary loss of life. The next class are worse

still: they conceal the fact that they are infected, and being still able to move about, mingle with others, imagining that they will be freed from the disease if they can only infect others; they go right into the houses and on the streets, gossiping with servants, petting children, and conducting themselves familiarly and intimately toward every one. Yes, I have been told that some are so desperately wicked as to visit families with their poisoned bodies, simply because they are angry that others are still uninfected, and to whom they would bring the pestilence, just as though this were a mere innocent joke."

"I know not whether to believe this!" cried LUTHER in horror. "If what you say is true, then I do not know whether we Germans are men or devils: and my advice is this, when such people are detected, that the judge take them by the neck and hand them over to Jack Ketch, as unbridled murderers and criminals. For what are they but assassins? Verily, it were better to dwell among wild beasts, than among such people! I know not what to preach to such murderers; they would pay no attention to what was told them. I commend the matter to those in authority, that they may attend to it; and settle it not by the aid and counsel of the physicians, but of the executioner."

"Would to God it had been done long since," exclaimed the physician; "the pestilence which now does its horrible work in this city, would not have become so dreadful, if foolhardiness and neglect, and wicked practices, had not brought the poison among the people. The air is still fresh and pure."

"Since you speak of the matter," continued LUTHER,

"there is one thing more which the authorities should see to: I refer to the fact that our cemeteries are right in the midst of the city. I cannot comprehend how this could have been so contrived. Christ's grave was prepared outside of the city, and Abraham bought as his place of burial the cave on the field of Ephron, and, therefore, not in the heart of a city; but we would have our burial-places nearer and more convenient to us than Abraham and the Lord Jesus himself. Not merely motives of necessity and health, but of devotion and respect, should prompt us to locate a public cemetery outside the city. For the spot where the dead lie in their final resting-places should of right be secluded and quiet, where one can go and stand devoutly and prayerfully meditate on death, the last judgment and the resurrection—so that it would be venerated, yea, almost holy ground, where one might walk reverentially, honoring the dead; for among those who sleep there, there are many faithful, beloved Christians. But what kind of a place is our Wittenberg cemetery? A space traversed by four or five streets, and occupied by two or three markets. In the whole city there is no more disturbed place and more wanting in quiet than this very cemetery, over which, by day and by night, man and beast travel daily, and to which every one has access by door and street, and where all sorts of things take place which utterly destroy the respectful and devout feelings associated with a place of burial. Verily, the Turk does surely not possess a place where his dead rest in less honor than do we Christians! I myself would rather be buried in the Elbe, or out in the woods, than in this very place, which is neither decent

nor sacred. This is my opinion. Let whoever will put my views into practice: let him who knows better than I do continue on as before: I am nobody's master."

When LUTHER concluded his remarks, Doctor Bugenhagen with his two deacons entered, and all were cordially greeted. Madame Luther and Doctor Schurff now left the room. The soldier being on the point of following their example, LUTHER called to him: "Tarry for an hour or two, my friend, and accept a luncheon at the hands of my dear Katy; by that time you shall receive an answer for his grace, the Elector."

"Reverend doctor," said the messenger, "I have the answer already."

"How so, my friend?" inquired Luther in surprise, but pleasantly.

"You have permitted me," answered Hesse, "to remain in your presence, and may God reward you for the rich comfort your words have afforded me. By them I know your reply to our most gracious prince: you are not going to Jena, but will remain in Wittenberg. And if all else forsake their sick neighbors in their sore distress, you will remain with them and care for them. O, Doctor, you are more than all of us put together."

"Do not err, my good friend," rejoined Luther kindly, and yet seriously. "Do you not know how Peter said to the Lord: 'Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.' You know how Peter kept his word. And I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of Peter's shoes! Go

now, my friend, and accept what my dear wife gladly and dutifully offers you."

When the soldier had left the room, Luther addressed his assembled friends and brethren as follows:

"Although a faithful Christian pastor is always sufficiently instructed by Scripture how to feed the flock, how to ward off danger and harm, and how to keep them in the true pasture; yet a time has come upon us by the dispensation of God, in which the pastoral office may be made to promote the general welfare by brotherly consultation, in order that all of us who are called to comfort and save souls by the Word of God and the sacraments, may stand in unity of opinion and action. For this reason, dear friends and co-workers in one hope of our calling, I have deemed it proper and even necessary to take counsel with you as to how we may best deport ourselves for the good of souls in this mournful time of pestilence, so that we may best discharge the duties of our office, doing neither too much nor too little, neither at the wrong time nor in the wrong way, that our office and the Word of God be not lowered or dishonored. You, dear Doctor Pommer, the pastor of our city, to whom the feeding of the flock has been committed by the great Shepherd, you ought to open the discussion of this highly important subject."

"Bugenhagen replied: "Reverend Doctor, I am come with my two brethren in the ministry, not to take counsel with you, but to ask your advice. We are indeed aware that you in your humility always think too little of yourself, and that you would always rather hear and learn than teach; but we know too that the

merciful God has illuminated you above us all with the light of his truth, and that no one has so clearly and so thoroughly acquainted himself with the Scriptures and the will of God as you have. We beg you, therefore, dear sir, to let us know your opinion, and we only wish yet to inform you that we have taken affectionately fraternal counsel together, and have vowed to one another to persevere to the end, and to discharge the duties of our office so long as one soul still desires our services, and we ourselves are spared by the plague."

"I expected nothing else of you," answered LUTHER heartily. "Now listen to my vow also, dear brethren; I shall share with you your cares and burdens, your danger and harm, come life come death. And though I gladly impart to you what God has vouchsafed to me in this matter, yet I am willing to submit to your judgment and clearer insight. The first duty resting upon us, as ministers, in these evil times, is to increase our admonitions to the people to go to church and hear the word of God preached, so that they may learn how to live and how to die. You are aware that I stood in the pulpit myself but yesterday, and taught the people. I hold that we should do this *daily* as long as the pestilence rages in our city."

"We have already done so, dear doctor," said Bugenhagen. "And we can bring you the comforting news that each of us has found large audiences gathered at our several services, who have received the Word of God with devout attention. Besides, we have not let the public sermon suffice, but have visited the people in their homes and have admonished them there."

"But here you should make a distinction," added LUTHER. "When you know or ascertain that an honest, pious person is confined to his bed by illness, you should visit him even if you are not invited, for you will always find a welcome from such. But there are many of rough and reckless disposition, who have lived in contempt of God's word; my advice is to let them be."

"But if they request us to come?" asked Bugenhagen.

"Well, *then* you may go," answered LUTHER. "But prove them and see whether they really, sincerely, yea, most seriously, with weeping and lamentation, show that they are repentant. Grace is free and faith is free, and coming to the house of God must be left free to every one. But to him who has lived like a heathen or a brute, or having lived thus, manifests no open sorrow, to him we will not administer the sacrament, nor receive him among the number of Christians. Let such an one die as he has lived, and himself look to his standing before God."

"And can we stand before God if we take such a course?" asked one of the deacons.

"We stand with and on the Scriptures," answered LUTHER, firmly and decidedly. "We are not to cast our pearls before swine; we are not to give that which is holy unto dogs! That is our Lord's injunction. What other course have we? There are hardened individuals, who care not for their souls, either in life or when dying. They go on their own way, and lie down like logs; they die, too, like logs, devoid of intelligence and of thought."

"Admitting you to be right," said Bugenhagen, "yet we ministers find even among those who do not despise the church and the word of God, some poor souls who, indeed, know what pertains to living, but not what pertains to dying. When death comes they are greatly terrified, as though they had never known of the existence of death, and that the body must surely return to dust. Alas! here is hard work for a pastor."

"And very often the care and labor is fruitless," added LUTHER. "My advice is to save what can be saved, and ever to remind men of death when they are yet in the fulness of life. Insist on this, dear brethren: proclaim in the markets and streets of the city, and from the house-tops, that every one, even though he be without a confessor or a pastor, should in good time prepare himself for death, and hold himself in readiness for the hour of his departure."

"And how may the people best do this?" asked the seeond deacon.

"Confession," answered LUTHER, "is the thing to lead thereto. Confession directs one to the law; the law leads to the fear of God, and the fear of God urges men unto the gospel of grace in Christ. Teach the people to confess and receive the sacrament every week or every two weeks; teach them to become reconciled every one with his neighbor, and to make their wills, so that if the Lord should call suddenly, and surprise them with death before the pastor or chaplain could reach them, they may yet have cared for their souls, and not neglected their best interests."

"Let this be done sedulously," said Bugenhagen;

"and, indeed, it is necessary for the sake of these poor souls. For where so great a mortality is raging, as among us at this time, we pastors are too few to visit all those who call on and for us."

"And," LUTHER quickly added, "if you had nothing to do but administer the sacrament as soon as you entered the presence of the sick, many persons might be served in one day; but if you bear in mind, dear brethren, that the majority of these people must first be instructed in the knowledge necessary to a Christian in the article of death—*that* takes time and trouble. Hence you should teach them how to die, even whilst they are in life. It would surely not be proper to erect daily a special pulpit and altar for those who neglect and delay to make preparation for the final hour. No, dear brethren, leave those who have despised the ordinary means of grace and the altar to which God has called all men in Christendom, to give account for themselves, and carry their guilt before their God."

The first deacon now remarked: "I was called yesterday in the greatest haste to a very sick person, for the purpose of administering the sacrament to him. On arriving at his home, I found a dying man who could no longer speak, and could give no sign showing that he knew who I was or what I wished to do. Although the people who stood around the bed lamenting urged me to administer the Sacrament, I did not comply, fearing an abuse of the ordinance, and the sin of administering the Sacrament to one who could no longer discern the Lord's body. The sick man died in my presence, and then the people charged me with having neglected to perform my duty as pas-

tor. The matter has since rested heavily on my heart and conscience, and I know not whether I did right or wrong."

"You did right, dear brother," was LUTHER'S firm and decided reply. "Under the papacy, the priest, of course, did what the people desired, and even thrust the sacrament into the throats of the dying, as if they were putting bread into a bag. May God preserve us from this sin against the body of the Lord! Whoever can no longer be asked whether he recognizes himself as a poor, lost sinner before God, whether he is penitent, whether he believes in the forgiveness of his sins for Christ's sake, or is unable by word or by sign to give any sort of answer to such questions, shall by no means partake of the sacrament."

"Then we shall often," objected Bugenhagen, "be unable to discharge our priestly duties; because it frequently happens that we are called in very late, when the sick are already in the agonies of death."

"Yet we cannot and dare not do otherwise," rejoined LUTHER. "I, too, am aware that some people live so carelessly and make so little provision for their poor souls, that they fail to call the pastor until their souls are on the point of leaving the body, and they are no longer able to speak, and have but little reason left. I know, too, that the family then come and beseech: 'Dear sir, only say *something* to him, the best you can do, in all haste; and give him the sacrament, even though he receives it and knows not what he is doing.' Poor foolish people! When the illness first begins they do not wish to hear of a pastor, perhaps even become angry when he visits them, and say: 'There is no dan-

ger, I hope; he will get better.' But what is a God-fearing pastor to do with such people, who do not care for body or soul, and die like brute beasts? Are we to preach the gospel to them at the last moment, and in all haste, when they neither hear nor understand? I say no, dear brethren, not so. We are to adhere to this: To him who can no longer speak or give a sign as to how he believes in the gospel and the sacrament, how he understands and desires it, to him we will never administer it, especially when we know that he has wantonly neglected it; for we are not commanded to administer the sacrament to the unbelieving, but to those who believe and who confess their faith in the Lord Jesus. Let all others depart as they have lived. We are excused, because there has been no want of preaching, teaching, admonishing, nor of comforting and visiting, nor of the discharge of our official duties in any particular.

"Dear gentlemen and brethren," LUTHER now said, turning to Melanchthon and Jonas, "the priestly care for souls is not committed to you as it is to us pastors, yet you stand upon the same rule of faith and hope with us. Tell us, are you willing and able to give your assent to this brief statement, explaining how we preachers and pastors are to act in regard to the dying?"

"You have expressed our views exactly, dear doctor," answered Melanchthon. "We stand with you upon the same rule of faith and hope, and I maintain that we dare not sin against the faith through false or weak love for our neighbor. I hold to the words of St. Paul: 'For whether we live, we live unto the Lord;

and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whoever has not lived unto the Lord Christ up to the hour of his death, may not be able to die in the Lord Christ."

"That is my opinion also," affirmed Justus Jonas; "for no one liveth unto himself, and no one dieth unto himself."

"And so this is finished now," continued LUTHER. "You will go to Jena, not to flee from the pestilence at this place, but because you owe obedience to your electoral prince. Now do not forget, dear brethren, that the pestilence which seizes the body—and terrible as it is, it may become more terrible still—yet is a small matter compared with the spiritual pestilence which sweeps off soul and body. I pray you, for Christ's sake, dear brethren, help us to do battle by means of prayer and doctrine against this real spiritual pestilence of the devil, with which he now poisons the world, and especially the blasphemers of the sacrament, although there are many other factions arising besides these. Help us to contend, dear sirs, with tongue and with pen, both at Wittenberg and at Jena: it is not our cause, it is the cause of Christ."

"For this very reason I entertain no fears for our cause," replied Melanchthon. "No one has yet lifted the rock, which is Christ, from its foundation, but he has broken all who have struck against it. But the Lord would rather save man than see him lost, and would greatly prefer to gather than scatter."

"Be not too hasty in interpreting the signs of the times as favorable to our cause!" rejoined LUTHER. "It is clear as noonday that Satan is enraged at us and our cause; perhaps he feels the approach of the

day of Christ rising against him and his kingdom; hence his awful rage, and his efforts to take the Lord Jesus Christ from us by his demoniac assaults. He has begun boldly to harass the body, so that one might almost fear for the weal of Germany. I would that I may be a false prophet; but when I see so many pious Christians and faithful preachers, such as Magister George in Halle, taken away at so many places in Germany by pestilence and by assassination, I fear that we have nothing more certain before us than an inundation of great misery over all the Fatherland, from which God is removing in advance his own children, so that they may not be destroyed with the wicked."

"You remind me," said Melanchthon, "of the language of the prophet Isaiah, that 'the righteous shall be taken away before misfortune befall them;' but do you not think, dear Doctor MARTIN, that we ought to comfort ourselves with the apostolic words of comfort: I being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

"Certainly, dear Philip," answered LUTHER; "only this one thing dare not be forgotten, that no one on earth may know when this day of Jesus Christ will begin, and that the Lord may appear in his glory on any day. The signs thereof might well be here and now. For the spirits of faction are creating such misery with all their might, that hearts are severed and suffer shipwreck as to their faith. If the hearts are once torn asunder, disunion, and all the terrors and abominations of war will soon follow, that the work begun by Satan through Muenzer, as a prelude, may be completed."

"But," said Jonas, in a tone of joyous confidence, "'he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.'"

"You comfort gladly and well, dear Doctor Jonas." said Luther heartily, and then continued with a smile, "Do not deal too gently with the devil. His cunning and wickedness are beyond the reach of our thoughts. Under the papacy Satan was nothing but flesh, and carried matters to an extent that even the hoods of monks had to be holy; but now Satan is trying another plan, and would be nothing but spirit, so that Christ's flesh and words are to be as naught."

"But you have served them well in your book," added Bugenhagen, referring to LUTHER'S tract against the sacramentarians, which had recently appeared in print. "Have you not learned what your opponents have done in regard to it?"

"They have already answered me," replied LUTHER. "I only wonder that their reply has thus far not yet found its way to Wittenberg. But I must reply once more, if God grants me life and strength, and then if they can not be brought to reason, I shall let them go. For I see that it only makes them worse, like the cimex leclularius, which smells badly enough of itself, but the more it is rubbed, the worse it smells. I hope, however, that where there is anything to be *maintained*, enough has been written in my book to answer this purpose. I have, God be praised, abundantly learned since then, how many straying and deceived souls I have delivered from their jaws by my book, and

how many more have been strengthened and confirmed in the truth. But, dear gentlemen and brethren, time urges us to part. God willing, we shall all meet again in health and gladness. Proceed on your journey, to which the Lord directs you, and leave me at my post. Christ, our Lord and Saviour, preserve you all in pure faith and brotherly love, unspotted and blameless, until his day comes to us all. Amen."

The friends now joined in the "Amen," and shook hands fraternally with one another.

"Pray for me, a poor sinner," said LUTHER, with a heart full of emotion. And with that he hastily passed into his chamber.

CHAPTER XXI.

REPENTANCE AND RECONCILIATION.

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise." Jeremiah xvii. 14.

THE plague, which at first had stricken down its victims only here and there, and more of the poorer class of people, now began to stretch forth its rapacious arms toward the more prominent and wealthy citizens, obliging the magistracy to take the most serious measures to oppose its course. The houses in which it raged were blockaded, and intercourse with their inmates forbidden. Fumigation of every kind was resorted to in the houses, and even on the public streets; the owners of houses were required to give notice of every case, and to separate the sick at once from the other members of the household, and diligently to air and purify by fire the articles most likely to carry the infection, such as woolen garments and clothing. With the exception of physicians and pastors, no one was to enter an infected house, except under the most urgent necessity, and all intercourse with the sick, especially the convalescent, was to be avoided.

Nevertheless the authorities could not and would not prevent attendance upon the sanctuary. Not only were certain hours devoted daily to prayer, at which time the ministers, following the advice and example of LUTHER, contended against the fear and nervousness of the people, and lessened the danger by Christian

preparation for death; but the desire for the Holy Supper grew so strong that multitudes of believers hastened to the churches in the early hours of the morning to prepare and strengthen themselves for life or for death by receiving the Holy Communion.

Margaret Homberger still remained in the house of Kranach, which had thus far escaped the infection, although Master Lucas, as chamberlain and city councillor, exposed himself to the danger of infection in various ways by the faithful discharge of his official duties.

Margaret had just finished repeating the morning prayer, accompanied by the children of her hospitable protector, when she was surprised by the entrance of Leonard and her sister Catharine. Her sensitive ear and still more feeling heart recognized her sister immediately, even before the latter had uttered a word; but the change in Catharine's outward appearance she could of course not perceive. Catharine had by no means regained the freshness and bloom which she had lost through her sickness; the traces of failing vitality were on the contrary rather more perceptible than before, and the pallid face with its deeply shadowed eyes awakened the warmest sympathy with the faded and withered beauty. But instead of this the restless, anxious fire had left her eyes; quiet, pious acquiescence in her lot was legible in every feature; even a faint smile influenced the expression of her countenance, rendered mournful only by the leanness and hollowness of the cheeks.

"Margaret, it is I," she said going up to her sister and taking her hand. "And Leonard is with me," she added. "How are you, my dear sister?"

"Ah, how happy you make me," answered Margaret. "You have no idea how happy this kind tone makes my heart.."

"I have not seen you for so long a time, and yet I have sighed for you daily and hourly," continued Catharine, "let me drink in these tones of your loved voice. Ah, how I have sighed for them."

"Margaret," her sister now went on to say, "do you remember the words you spoke to me *that evening*, 'If you knew him, the only One, who does not wound, but heals?' At that time I did not understand you; but to-day I know *him*, and it is *he* who leads me to you. Then I came to you, and said: 'Forgive me my sins.' But I did not know that I was sinning in my penitence, for I thought of myself alone, and wished to purchase the desire of my eyes with your forgiveness. But to-day I come to you, and again say: 'Forgive me my sins,' for *he* cannot forgive me until you have forgiven me."

"You hesitate?" she asked, as her sister did not immediately reply. "Do you find it hard, Margaret?"

"Oh, let me rejoice in the fulness of my joy!" cried the blind girl. "I hesitate because I have no words to express the sweet delight of my soul. Catharine, is it really possible? Only tell me once more that it is *he* who leads you to me."

"Is it he," asked Catharine, "if I say of him, that he alone can save me? Is it he if I now know that I myself am the dumb who is to speak, and the blind one who is to see? Is it he, Margaret, if I tell you that I cannot now pray any other prayer than, 'Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me?' Is it he, sis-

ter," she went on, although her voice trembled, "is it *he* if I confess of him that he receives sinners, and that my last hope rests in this confession? *Is* it he? Answer."

But Margaret did not answer. Burning tears flowed down her cheeks, which were aglow with a transport of joy, as she embraced her sister and wept aloud.

"I knew that this day must come," she at length said. "O, thou dear, faithful Lord and Shepherd, I knew that thou wouldst not rest until thou hadst found her. Ah, how should I be worthy of such joy!"

Again she drew her sister to her heart, and softly passed her hands over her face to feel her features, as if she would assure herself that it was really Catharine who was standing before her. But alarmed at finding hollow cheeks and prominent cheek-bones, instead of the former plumpness, she exclaimed: "Catharine, it is *your* voice which falls on my ear, it is *your* breath that fans my cheek, it is the soft luxuriance of *your* beautiful hair which I feel; but your face is changed, your hands are changed. Have you been ill again, dear sister?"

"I was ill, and perhaps am so yet," she replied, calmly. "But do not let that trouble you. I am happy, and do not think of my body."

"Leonard," said Margaret, turning to the young man, "why did you not tell me of this?"

"I was not permitted to do so," he replied. "Catharine had exacted the promise from me to keep her second illness a secret from you."

"And you could do this?" asked the blind girl, kindly reproaching her sister. "Did you not deem me worthy of serving you in your distress?"

"It was not that," answered Catharine. "I knew that the sickness was not unto death, although in my folly I wished to die. But I had vowed to myself not to see you again until I could meet you without uncharitableness and without envy. When I made this vow, I of course was not aware that I would not be able to accomplish it by my own strength. I was pleased at the idea of sacrificing myself for you. I reveled in the enthusiastic delusion that you would lament and weep for me if I were to sacrifice myself for your sake. I, poor creature, did not know that all bitterness and enmity against our fellow-men can be removed only when the enmity against the Lord has been taken away. Not until now have I learned that *he*, dear Margaret, who so long was the mystery between myself and yourself and Leonard, whose name I knew, but in whom I did not believe, that *he* alone can reconcile all differences. Margaret, now that I have *him*, I have everything. But," interrupting herself, "although I would speak of *him* alone at present, we will do this at some future time. I hear the bell of the Augustinians, calling the weary and heavy-laden. I have prepared myself to partake of the sacrament to-day for the first time. I come to you, dear Margaret, and entreat you, do not look at my guilt. I do not desire to mitigate my punishment, but O, think of my blindness, and *then* pardon all the sorrow I have caused you. I thought evil against you, but God meant it all for good. Will you forgive me, Margaret?"

"O thou dear soul," answered Margaret, with the deepest emotion. "Let me speak proudly this once,

for I have no other expression for my joy. When I heard from LUTHER's lips for the first time the words: 'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,' I thought to myself: 'That will most likely be the happiness of the redeemed when they unexpectedly meet with souls over whom they have mourned at the moment of their departure from earth, thinking they did not belong to the Lord, and whom they have nevertheless found to be saved.' You know, Catharine, that the gracious God has made me a thousand-fold substitution for my sightless eyes; that I enjoy hours of bliss in my silent night, which are lost to you who have sight. But happy as I have been, I always repeated the question to myself: 'How great may be the joy of the angels in heaven?' Now, Catharine, I ask no longer—now my joy is full. The angels in heaven cannot have greater joy over one sinner that repenteth than I have because of your love to the Lord, at the knowledge that we two, nourished by the same mother, now are one *before* the Lord and *in* the Lord."

"Then you have forgiven me all the pain I caused you?" asked her sister.

Margaret laid both hands on her bosom, and said solemnly: "My whole soul says, Yes; and yet I dare not utter it."

"You dare not?" repeated Catharine, pained at these words, and slowly drooping her head.

"I dare not," the blind girl assured her. "If I pronounce this word Yes, which you desire me to do, I sit in judgment on you, and the LORD is the *only* Judge."

"You *too* may judge," continued Catharine; "I have sinned against you, and am amenable to your judgment. May you not confess that I have caused you unutterable sorrow, when I, whose heart and conscience is burdened by it, sit in judgment on myself."

"For that very reason I dare not judge you," said Margaret. "Do you not know the words of the gospel, 'For if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged.'"

"Margaret," now said her sister, sadly, "you will not have me to stand *beside* you; I am always to look *up* to you."

"May the Lord keep me from being thus minded," quickly responded the blind girl, and then went on more calmly: "Catharine, since you force me to the confession, I must speak what I wished to keep from you. Catharine, do you know since when my soul found its way to the Lord?—since when I sought a Comforter in my distress?"

"Since LUTHER has been preaching the gospel in Wittenberg," answered Catharine.

"Father LUTHER," rejoined Margaret, "was only the instrument in the hands of the Lord. LUTHER was the earthly, visible physician, who directed me to the heavenly Physician. No, Catharine, I sought the Lord from the moment in which I distinctly felt that the hearts of my father and my sister had no room for my love. It was the gracious, wondrous ordering of God that LUTHER at that time preached on the words of David: 'When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.' Then I thought to myself: Mother is dead; father and sister are also dead to you. This word of comfort may then apply to you.'

And, with this one thought, my whole heart was opened to the Lord. From that hour faith grew within me like the grain of mustard seed, and—"

It was only now for the first that Margaret fully recognized whom she was addressing. Filled with the bliss of recollection, she had totally forgotten the present, and to whom she was speaking. Now only did she discover by the quiet sobbing of Catharine, that her words, like barbed arrows, had wounded the heart of her poor sister. Drawing her to herself with both hands, she said: "Catharine, now you see what you have done, to what you have driven me. Oh, do not weep, I did not wish to pain you, I only wished to tell you that I have nothing for which to forgive you, since you and poor father are only the instruments which influenced my blindness to lead me to the Lord. Catharine, dear sister, forgive me, and do not weep."

"I am not weeping for what *you* have said," responded Catharine, "I am weeping for what *I* have done. How deeply had I fallen, and was not aware of it."

"And how high has the Lord exalted you?" added Margaret joyfully. "I recognize in this an instance of God's great and merciful grace, which permits us to recognize the depth of our fall, only when we are again standing on the height, or rather whilst we are climbing up to the height. If we had a full view of our misery in the deepest night of our folly, we would lose courage and fall into despair."

"But, dear Margaret," objected Leonard: "Is not this full view of our misery necessary to urge us up-

ward? Did not FATHER LUTHER say not long ago, that the only reason why the Lord held more frequent and more intimate intercourse with publicans and sinners than with the rest of the people, was the fact that the greatest sinners are more easily converted than those who are fond of deeming themselves just before God, because they are barely just in the eyes of men?"

"Certainly, Leonard," answered the blind girl. "Yet my own heart and life tells me that the mercy of God toward us is wondrously great in this very respect. Perhaps you are thinking of the fear of God's wrath and judgment, which awakens in us suddenly, and urges us toward his grace. But this fear conceals the full view into the depth of our hearts, simply because it is fear. As we only recognize the grace of God in detail, so we can only know the misery of our sins now here and then there. Yes, the more I recognize the unspeakable glory, to which the Lord will exalt me, the more I appreciate the depths out of which the hand of the Lord draws me to himself."

"Yes, it must be thus," said Catharine, deeply moved by the ecstatic language of her sister; "when the Almighty had cast me down so low by sickness and impending death, by the destruction of all my hopes and a knowledge of the nothingness of all my so-called good works, that I for the first time in my life was without counsel, without comfort, without help, then I felt naught but fear and trembling in view of the judgment of him who can destroy body and soul in hell. Then you interposed, Leonard, in my sore distress, and proclaimed to me: '*Christ, who saves us.*' And I received

this saying as one that is condemned to death receives the letter of pardon. I felt a blissful tremor, inasmuch as I was not to be lost. I knew not how great or how small my guilt before God was: I only felt that it pressed me to the ground, and that when I could believe in Christ, a powerful hand removed it far from me. This happened only a few days ago; but since then my perception is becoming more free from hour to hour. In that which even so short a while ago as yesterday seemed right and praiseworthy in my past life, I to-day can see the proud and foolish heart and the deluded mind. That which I thought I could justify before God's judgment-seat yesterday, to-day I know to be condemned. And did not the consciousness of my guilt keep equal step with the consciousness of the grace vouchsafed me, I should despair."

"Sister," said Margaret, joyously, "how did you obtain such a wealth of Christian truth? Oh, tell me how you found the Lord."

"What do you ask of me?" responded Catharine; "You should be able to tell me that, dear Margaret, you who know the secret life of the soul better than any of us, and who can almost see how one thought links itself with another, and how one touch of feeling merges into another. How I found the Lord, you wish to know? Well, Margaret, I found him at the very moment I had lost everything else. Do you remember, Leonard," she went on, as the two stood before her lost in thought, "do you remember how you spoke to me of the hot iron which I should not dip into cold water, but into healing oil? At that time I did not understand a word of it; but now I know what

you meant, Leonard," she suddenly added, with unusual excitement, "I fear that even oil is too severe: it does not assuage the pain, it burns."

"Merciful God! what ails you?" cried Leonard, in alarm, as he noticed the sudden pallor of Catharine's face.

"I feel cold," said Catharine, shivering from head to foot. "On my head is a load of lead resting, that threatens to crush me. I am so tired! Have pity on me; I am unhappy enough already." And then she gave vent to her feelings in a quiet flood of tears.

Leonard led the tottering girl to the arm-chair, whilst Margaret groped her way, so familiar to her, as quickly as she could to the sitting-room of the Kranachs, to secure assistance.

"How do you feel now, dear Catharine?" inquired the young man, as he smoothed the luxuriant curls from her face, her head being bowed so low that her eyes were entirely covered by them.

"I am very sad," she answered. "Give me a comforting word, Leonard. You have cast me down so often; raise me up for this once."

"You deceive yourself, Catharine," responded Leonard, with heartfelt sympathy. Have you not but a little while ago raised up and strengthened us both by the power of your believing heart? How can it be that you can all at once be so bereft of consolation?"

"I have belied myself and you," she continued, an awful chill seizing upon her. "There is no comfort in anything. The crushed flower can never be restored."

"Not by *him?*" asked Leonard.

Catharine shook her head, and said: "No, not by

him. He could do it, but he does not—at least, not for me. No one can help me; I am lost."

In the meantime Kranach, accompanied by his wife and Margaret, entered the room. When Master Lucas drew nearer he was startled, but soon regained his composure, and said, as calmly as possible, to the sick girl: "Miss Catharine, you are not quite well. It would be better for you if you were to go to bed. We will have you taken home."

At this Catharine looked at Kranach with a glance of most profound sadness and said: "Will you not grant me a little rest in your house?—you who have received my sister Margaret so kindly. No, you are right; I am not worthy of your kindness. The daughter that was rejected can find another home, but I, who have driven her from her father's house, may find no rest. Did not God forbid a place of refuge to Cain, the fratricide? I am under the judgment of God."

"Dear sister," Margaret entreated her, "how can you speak such horrible words? Do you not know that all the past is forgiven and forgotten? Are we not all prepared to serve you in your distress? I will go back with you to our father's house."

"Yes, *you* can do that," rejoined Catharine; "but I cannot, I dare not do it. You are innocent, and you bring a blessing into the house of the curse; but I, the guilty one, have no longer a home in that house. I will tell you," she continued as though she would communicate some horrible mystery: "*I am afraid of father.* Father cannot love us both at the same time. *My* time is past: now you hold my place in his heart.

You could bear his curse, for it fell upon an innocent head; I cannot bear it. Go, Margaret, and leave me here. But before you go, hand me a drink of water; a fire burns within me, with a flame which threatens to consume me."

Whilst Dame Kranach hastened away to procure the asked-for draught, and Margaret bent down over her sick sister softly touching her forehead with her hands, Master Kranach drew the young man aside and said: "Leonard, there is a great danger here; you are a man and are not afraid. I must tell you, the unhappy Catharine has been attacked with the plague. Do all you can to persuade her to return home as soon as possible. Think of my wife and my children!"

"Almighty God," cried Leonard. "Is this really so? May you not possibly be mistaken, Master Kranach?"

"Would to God I were mistaken," he replied. "But all these symptoms point in but one direction. The sudden weariness, the heaviness of the head, the leaden-colored hue, the chill, which makes her tremble, and the tormenting thirst she feels, besides the great dejection of her spirits—all this is the certain beginning of the plague. It is still possible to carry her to her father's house without danger; it is even likely that for a few hours she will seem to grow better; but do not be deceived—wherever this horrible disease has once stretched out its hands to seize upon a victim, it never lets him go."

"Then she must die?" asked Leonard, greatly alarmed.

"The almighty and gracious God can save even

when danger is the most imminent," answered Kranach. "But do not neglect the hour in which man might still be able to help."

The lady of the house now returned with a cup of water, which Catharine partook of from Margaret's hand. When she had enjoyed the refreshing draught, the sick girl suddenly arose from her seat and said: "Ah, that has refreshed me; my strength is returning. Come, Leonard: conduct me to the house of God, to the altar of the Lord,"

"Are you really strong enough to go?" asked the young man. "Would it not be better if you were to go home with me? You can receive the Holy Communion at home."

"You too, Leonard," cried Catharine pained by his words. "You have done me so much harm, will you not for once do me a kindness? Leonard, do you grudge me the Communion of the body and blood of Christ?"

"Oh, dear sister," responded Leonard, "how can you harbor such thoughts? I am only caring for your bodily welfare, when I beseech you to return home and there to receive attention. Obey me only this once, Catharine."

"But Catharine shook her head and said: "No, I dare not go home until I have received the forgiveness of my sins and the Holy Sacrament. You do not know what I have suffered on your account: do me this one favor and go with me to the Lord's table."

"You hesitate," she continued, when Leonard in his anxiety and solitude knew not what to say or do. "Leonard, if I die before I have received the Holy

Sacrament, I will accuse you before God. If you will not go with me, I shall go alone. The merciful God will most likely send me some kind-hearted person to lift me up, if I should faint on the way to the house of God."

"Well then," said the young man, "we will make the attempt. Come, Catharine, I will go to the altar of the Lord with you."

"Oh, do not go without me," now plead Margaret with tears in her eyes. "Come, sister," she continued, twining her arms about Catharine's neck. "Now we are both happy in hope and faith. Receive in this kiss the half of my soul, and give me yours in return; and as a token of our love and trust in the Lord, take me with you to God's house. The Lord will bless our compact by the communion of his body and blood."

Mute as to words, but speaking in happy tears, the sisters remained in their mutual embrace—one in the Lord, like two branches of the same vine. Leonard and the two others stood by, gazing with deep emotion and silent prayers into the gracious leadings of the Almighty.

Then Leonard and the two sisters made themselves ready, and left the hospitable house amid the most heartfelt blessings of Kranach and his wife. Leonard offered the blind girl his left arm, and the right to Catharine; but she refused it, and endeavored to walk without support. Her strength, however, soon gave out.

"Poor man!" said she, smiling painfully, to Leonard. "I did not wish to burden you, but the hand of the Lord is too heavy for my strength." With these words

she leaned so heavily upon the young man's arm that he could with difficulty walk without bending. Her step became slower and slower, and her breathing grew more labored and difficult.

"Oh!" cried Catharine, "my punishment would be too severe if I were not to reach the house of God. Leonard, could you not support me with your other arm?"

That was, of course, an impossibility, but Margaret came to the rescue. She left Leonard's arm, and stepping to the other side, supported her sister to the best of her ability. At last, at last, they reached the steps of the sanctuary. But Catharine, now completely exhausted, sank down upon the church steps, and said: "I can go no further. Merciful God! let me not perish from thirst so near the fountain. Entreat the Lord for me, Leonard and Margaret. The Lord will hear your prayers, even if he may not mine. Oh, Lord," she continued, herself engaging in prayer, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. Let me not faint with thirst on the way to thee. Even though I am not worthy to be received by thee, yet thou wilt not thrust me into utter misery. Yes, Lord," she now proceeded with renewed strength, whilst a fleeting, feverish glow covered her livid cheeks, and wild, despairing glances shone from her eyes, "yes, Lord, thou *darest* not forsake me. I will accuse thee at my judgment if thou dost not save me. I constrain thee with thy word 'that thou receivest sinners and eatest with them.' Lord, thou art not the Saviour of the world if thou permittest the humblest soul that longs for thee to be lost. Thou art no real intercessor

if thou canst accomplish nothing with thy Father. O Lord, I sin as I pray; but thou alone knowest the fearful sufferings that I endure. Let me not die here! Let me see my poor father once more, that I may tell him that no one but thyself can save."

"Come now," she cried out faintly, "assist me to rise; I feel somewhat relieved. Come, before it is too late."

With the help of her two companions, Catharine was enabled to rise and slowly to enter the house of God.

A great multitude had gathered there, and was about to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The last of these were kneeling at the confessional of the two deacons; and Catharine, with anxiety and timidity, as if she feared that some one else might take the empty place, stepped up to the confessional of Pastor Bugenhagen.

When she had reached it she kneeled down, and looked at Margaret and Leonard beseechingly, for the latter had stood aside and some distance away. As they failed to understand her glance, she beckoned to them to come and join her in making confession.

"I wish you to hear my confession," said she, when her two companions had assumed a kneeling posture at her side. "Reverend father," she now began, her feverish excitement returning, "I am a great sinner: none greater has knelt at your feet. My mother died of grief over me, because I despised her commands, and I did not love her; I could not love her, because she loved my sister. My father is afflicted with insanity, brought on him by me. My sister I thrust from the house, because she was loved by him who

hated me. My whole life has been one of sin in thought, word and deed. The Lord in his love wished to save me; but I was unwilling. He was forced to drive me to the extreme of misery; he was compelled to show me the abyss before which I stood, ere I cried to him: Lord, help me! Tell me, reverend father, can I still be saved?

"Are you heartily sorry for all your sins?" asked Bugenhagen.

"Yes, sir," she replied; "were my life not already forfeited I would offer my life, could I put away the guilt of these sins by so doing."

"And do you believe," continued Bugenhagen, "that your sins can be forgiven in Christ and through Christ?"

"Yes, I believe it," answered Catharine. "If this hope deceives me, then am I most unhappy."

"And will you," asked Bugenhagen further, "receive my word as though our Lord Christ himself had spoken it to you?"

"Yes, sir," she assured him. "I have long despised you and your gospel, but now I know that you are true and faithful servants of the Lord."

The deeply-moved father-confessor now announced forgiveness of sins, grace and salvation to her; and did the same to the other two when they had confessed their sins and their faith in the Lord, as the only Mediator and Redeemer.

Bugenhagen had observed that the girl was ill, and, having good reason to fear that too long a delay would completely exhaust her remaining strength, directed the three to approach the table of the Lord

in advance of the others, and then to leave the house forthwith.

As Catharine came up hand in hand with Margaret and Leonard to receive the sacrament, her tears indeed flowed incessantly, but a quiet smile nevertheless shed its radiance over her countenance, giving evidence of the peace and happiness that now reigned in her heart. When they had reached the vestibule, Catharine embraced her sister and said: "Now I too know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he will awaken me out of the grave, and that I shall be where you are, and where he is. And now come with me to our father's house. *Now* I can look into my father's eye, and join you in offering up prayer for him. You too, Leonard, come with us. Do you remember that I could not bring my dear sister's name over my lips, when I tried to speak to my father? Now I can do it, and you are to be witnesses how I do it. Come, come," she urged. "My strength will soon be exhausted, and I dare not entreat the Lord twice."

The three proceeded on their way to the Homberger dwelling, which they reached full of care and anxiety. Catharine was unable to ascend the stairs. Then Leonard carried her tenderly up to bed in his arms. When he looked around for Margaret, she was not with him. He hastened down stairs to procure her aid.

He found the blind girl still standing on the threshold. "Margaret," he cried, "will you not come in? Catharine needs speedy assistance. Go up, and take the maid with you. I will summon the physician."

"Go, go, Leonard," she quickly replied. "Do not

be concerned about me. I shall do all I can. Go, Leonard: for Catharine's sake delay no longer."

"Margaret," now said the young man seizing her hand, "The Lord protect you; I must tell you, what you do not as yet know: Catharine has been seized with the plague. Go and wait on your sister, as is your plain duty; but think of me too. Your life is my life."

Saying this, he hastily left the house. But Margaret speaking to herself quietly said: "I expected father to be on the threshold, ready to receive me to his heart and to change the curse into a blessing, But my thoughts are not God's thoughts, nor my ways his ways. Yet I know that he leads all things well and to a glorious issue. In thy name, O Lord, under thy holy protection, I will again enter this house."

So saying, she passed along the accustomed passage, and did as Leonard had bidden her.

CHAPTER XXII.

DEATH OF CATHARINE.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."—1 Cor. xv. 26.

IN Homberger's house all possible aid was afforded Catharine in her illness. The physician, Doctor Schurff, found willing assistants in Leonard, Margaret, and the house-maid, who cheerfully and promptly carried out his directions. Still, anxious care could not be altogether banished from the heart, notwithstanding all the trust reposed in God, and all the Christian love toward one's fellow-men, ever ready to sacrifice self for others. Hence all the attendants of the sick girl needed a constant renewal of their courage and their trust in God, through prayer and faith in the gracious promises of the Lord.

The plague is probably the most horrible disease which can attack the human body, not merely because of its loathsomeness, so that the sight of one thus affiicted fills the beholder with horror, not only on account of its effect externally upon the body, but also on account of the horrible consequences produced internally. Since it shatters all the energies of life, and destroys the manifold individual life of all the limbs, muscles and nerves, the plague belongs to those natural evils in the world which are liable to make a weak and partial confidence, or a merely intellectual faith, doubt the wisdom and goodness of God.

When the Holy Scriptures inform us that the angel

of the Lord stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem, so that the pestilence came upon Israel, and caused seventy thousand men to perish from Dan to Beersheba in three days (2 Sam. xxiv. 13–16), or when Ezekiel proclaims this threat against the unrepentant Jewish nation: "The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within, and he that is in the city, famine and pestilence shall devour him" (Chap. vii. 15), or when the Lord utters a threat against death: "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction"—then we feel the terror and the awful power of this fearful enemy of our bodily life just as much as, on the other hand, we feel the glorious promise of God refreshes us—the promise given to those that dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and that abide under the shadow of the Almighty, in these words: "Thou shalt not be afraid for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."

There was only one person in Homberger's house who was free from care and apprehension, and equally untouched by the comfort of a Christian believing heart; and this was the master himself, who for some time had been restored in body, but was still deprived of the light of reason. He, however, kept himself perfectly quiet, and did no one the least injury. He often worked in his shop, beginning various things, and finishing nothing. He spoke to nearly every one that approached him, or paid any attention to his remarks; but he did this in such a way as though it were always

one and the same person whom he was addressing, namely, the friend of his youth, Urban, with whom he imagined himself engaged in their wonted avocation. He ate and drank, and even spent hours in which he was thoroughly cheerful and in good spirits; but his intellect remained clouded. He was no longer conscious of having been a husband and a father—he was not in Wittenberg, but in Augsburg; he did not feel himself to be a man of advancing years, but a strong, robust youth, before whom the entire future of earthly life still lay untrodden.

The unhappy man resembled a dreamer, who continues his dreams with open eyes, and whose whole soul is so completely wrapped up in these that nothing save a peculiarly severe shock could bring him back out of dream-life into the completeness of reality. At times only, when Leonard's voice named a name which touched the innermost chords of his soul, did the flash of consciousness light up his eyes; but this momentary awakening always passed away again into the wonted dream-life.

It was not, however, the will of the merciful Father that the unhappy man should die in this night of his soul; but that he should be brought to the knowledge of the truth.

Let us draw near the sick-bed of his daughter, Catharine.

She lay on her couch of pain, motionless; her hands hanging powerless and purposeless. She complained anew of an icy coldness which chilled her down into her very soul, of mortal weariness in every limb, and especially of a heaviness of the head, weighing her

down like lead, and threatening to crush her. The cold fit soon passed off; but it was followed by a burning fever, which increased and raged through the innermost parts of the body like a consuming fire.

She cried almost incessantly, "Water, water! Take care, the flames will soon burst forth from my body. Leonard, hand me the cup *yourself;* give me to drink; it seems to me as if only what I receive from your hand would cool my torment. Leonard, you are Lazarus; I am the rich man in hell. Oh! dip the tip of your finger into the water and cool my parched tongue."

"Dear, dear Catharine," said Leonard, laying his hand on the burning forehead of the sick girl. "Alas! that we poor creatures are so very helpless, and can do nothing but pray for you and point you to the cross, that you may bear in patience the chastisement of the Lord like a good and faithful hand-maid. Tell me, Catharine, is your heart at rest? Are you content and reconciled with your God and to your lot?"

"I must be," she answered, the tears starting to her eyes and deep sadness and grief overspreading her whole face. "Leonard," she said, "I know that I must die, I do not murmur against the Lord; it is good for me to die; my time on earth is drawing to a close at the right hour, when all my earthly hopes are buried. To one who has no future on earth, death is a boon. Leonard, I am loath to die, without your having looked into my heart. As I now love the Lord with all my soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength, so I loved *you*, Leonard, from the first moment when you entered our house. But my love to you was sinful, because it drove me to treat my

sister with injustice and cruelty: hence you did not return my love, hence you pierced my soul with your words, and drove me to despair. You shall know that I die of grief, because of you; the thought that I could not win you for myself has eaten my life away; you were the cause of my first illness, when I wished to die in the vain hope that my death would pain you; but I was not permitted to die, because I had not yet been pardoned by the Lord. You now throw me on the second bed of sickness, from which I shall not arise, although I now wish to do so."

"Cease, Catharine, cease," cried Leonard deeply agitated. "Have mercy on me; do you not feel that you are placing a burden on me, a burden so heavy that it must crush me. Will you die cursing me?"

"O blind, blind!" said Catharine with a weary smile. "Can you not perceive that my soul still clings to you? Rest easy, Leonard; I do not accuse you, but *myself*, my weak, foolish heart, my spiritual darkness, the pride of my whole life, which has brought this woe on me. If you had not come into our house, I should have remained for life in this darkness. But you have so wounded my heart as to crush me to the earth. That you could despise me and love my sister, who in my eyes was no more than a servant, carrying the curse of our house, was more than I could bear. I was the mistress, she the servant. All who entered our house sought my favor; my father's heart and judgment were in my hands; many sought my love; but I despised them all, because in my vanity I thought them beneath me, and I directed them to my humble sister in contemptuous derision. Then you

came, Leonard. When I saw you, I said to myself: 'He is the only one you would like to serve.' My pride was broken, and with it my heart, for I saw that you had no love for me. See, Leonard, during this period of my life, of my hopeless love for you, there is no curse and no blessing that I did not experience on your account in the stillness of my heart. When father thrust Margaret out of the house, I trembled with sympathy for the poor girl; but when I remembered that this blow on Margaret's head must strike you too, I regained my composure. Am I not mad, Leonard, to make such a confession to you? But, believe me, Leonard, the fact *that* I do so, the fact that I am *able* to make this avowal, is the very last happiness of my life. Now I know that the Lord has humbled me, and on this my hope for the grace of God is founded. Leonard, now I know that I could be saved in no other way than by the most complete humiliation of my proud heart."

"Catharine," said the young man, "if I have pained you by my words, it was caused by my sincere sorrow at the condition of your soul. I have never hated you, as you seem to think. I could have made any sacrifice for your sake, in order to assist you to obtain true happiness and peace. Believe me, Catharine, I rebuked, and consequently pained you, because of the love I bore you in my heart."

"It is well that you did not tell me this before, Leonard," rejoined the girl, with a sad, fleeting smile. "Up to this time I would not have believed you, or mayhap, would foolishly have misinterpreted your words. Call Margaret hither," she suddenly exclaimed.

"The fire in my body burns anew, and now it will consume me. I feel as though mad thoughts would force their way into my head. What I intend to do, I must do this very moment. Is Margaret here yet?

Fichtner had meanwhile conducted her sister from an adjoining room to the sick girl's bed, where they stood side by side.

"Nearer, nearer!" Catharine entreated. "I would like to give you my blessing, but I cannot lift my hands. Lay your hands on mine."

When they had done as she desired, she said: "Margaret, from your lips I first heard these words of Scripture: 'Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' See, dear sister, the Lord has verified his words. From the vain height of my pride, he has cast me down into the dust, and has raised you up from your low estate. If in the days of my blindness I had foreseen this, I would have blasphemed the decrees of God; but now I lie prostrate, and adore and am thankful that the Lord in heaven is a just Judge, and a gracious, merciful God. Margaret, as I at one time looked down on you with contempt, so I now look up to you with humility. I regarded you as the curse of our house, and lo! you are its blessing—the gracious gift of God, predestined to save me, and who will yet save our unhappy father. May all the happiness which in the better hours of my life I dreamed of, hoped and prayed for from on high for my own self, be *yours* beyond measure! May the Lord cause the tears of my repentance to become a fountain of heavenly joys for you! Here on earth you have waited on me, like a servant; yonder, in the

kingdom of the Lord, if he should receive me there, I will gladly be your servant. Be a happy wife with this man, the only one on earth before whom my heart was ever humbled. Kiss me—if you are not afraid of one who is dying, sister, kiss me. I cannot raise my lips to yours—kiss me, in token of our reconciliation."

"Reconciled in the Lord and by the Lord," sobbed Margaret, laying her head on her sister's breast, whilst Leonard's tears fell upon the pale face of the dying girl.

"Merciful heavens!" cried Leonard, suddenly; "she is dying! Catharine, do not leave us yet; we have so much to say to you."

But Catharine heard him not; her eyes were closed, her breathing scarcely perceptible. She showed no signs of life, save the bare absence of death. At this moment Doctor Schurff, the physician, entered.

"You come too late," exclaimed Leonard.

"Would to God it were so," he replied, when he had examined the dying girl more closely; "she would then have gained the victory over the terrors of death before she had experienced them. But the hardest struggle is yet to come; she is only in a stupor, and will soon awaken to endure the pains of death. Pray the Lord to shorten her sufferings, for there is no earthly hope for her."

And, as the physician had foretold, so it came to pass. Catharine again opened her eyes; but they glittered with the light of disturbed reason. By turns her glances were fixed, now lustreless and then gleaming wildly; her cheeks shrunk away to the very bones, and were covered with an ashen-gray veil; her bosom

heaved laboriously. Her body, up to this time weary unto death, was now tossed violently from side to side, as though by invisible hands. This terrible stage of the disease was succeeded by renewed debility and utter prostration—all consciousness was gone.

After a while the apparently lifeless body regained a little vitality; the light of madness shone from her eyes, an insane smile played about her features. With an effort the sick girl opened her mouth, and repeated:

"These jetty locks, my love,
Thou dost approve:
Wouldst be my knight, and true?
Thou mayest sue.

"For thou hast grace and charm
Of speech and form;
And thy two sparkling eyes,
I greatly prize."

Then she began to sing unintelligible words, in fearful, hollow tones. A slight twitching of her hands evidenced that she wished to rise and extend them; but like a mass of lead they remained pressed down by her side.

The crazed smile now changed to delirious pain; all her features were distorted, so that her appearance was completely altered. Dread, terror, despair wrought with terrible force in every muscle of her face.

"Put out the fire!" cried the unhappy girl, summoning all her strength. "Don't you see it? The whole house is on fire; the burning rafters are falling down on me. Do not let me burn up! I will confess everything. I have murdered, robbed, plundered! I have killed father and mother, poisoned Margaret! I

have given over my soul to Satan. Holy Mary, he comes to claim my soul! No, no!"

And now, although the poor girl had been utterly helpless and unable to move a limb of her body, she raised herself suddenly, as if lifted by an invisible hand, and threw herself headlong with such force that her head lay at the foot of the bed.

"For God's sake, for Christ's sake!" she now cried, as consciousness returned for a moment, "let me crawl on the ground like a worm, that you may trample upon me! Water, water! throw me into the Elbe! My whole body is on fire! Oh, have pity! I can bear these torments of hell no longer!"

After the unhappy girl had been brought back to her former position in the bed, with much trouble and exertion, they gave her a cup of water, or rather held it to her lips, for she was again unable to make the least exertion.

She emptied the cup to the last drop, and then repeated her agonizing cry of, "Water! water!"

"Give her what she asks," said the physician, when those present asked him, with mute looks and loud weeping, whether they should comply with her wishes or not, "I can do nothing more."

"Then she is lost?" inquired Leonard.

"There is but one hope," answered Doctor Schurff. "If the body reddens within half an hour, and carbuncles are formed, so that the plague-matter comes out, then it is possible—barely possible," repeated the physician. "The result is in God's hand alone, and I must tell you this attack is one of the most violent I have seen. There are but few that do not yield to it."

Hardly had Leonard responded to the patient's second call for water, when she again called for more. It seemed as though the liquid evaporated the very moment it touched the burning body, just as a drop of water falling on a red-hot stove. Opening her mouth, the sufferer uttered unintelligible sounds—probably another anxious cry for water, for when her weeping attendants hesitated what to do, as it was impossible to understand what she said, she made motions with her lips, like one famishing with thirst.

Soon the strength to do this was exhausted, and her swollen, blackened tongue now lay protruding from her mouth. Her thirst was unquenchable in the full sense of the word. The refreshing and cooling effect of the water hardly lasted as long as the touch of the liquid on the palate.

"Almighty, merciful God!" cried Margaret, falling on her knees, and burying her face in the bed clothing as she inhaled her sister's hot breath.

"Do not tempt God," said the physician, kindly but firmly. "Get up, Margaret. Let one victim suffice. You are not doing what is right."

"I will die with my sister!" she cried, frantically. "What is life to me when she is no longer with me?"

"Get up," repeated the good physician. "You sin against God by persisting in your determination. I entreat you, for Christ's sake, to arise and go away."

"You order me away?" cried Margaret, with increased excitement. "Do you think that sisterly love can be given or taken away at the command of man?"

"But you can render no assistance," rejoined the physician, as calmly and kindly as he could.

"You do not know that," answered Margaret, vehemently. "I know as well as you, that but one victim will fall in this house: and do you know who this victim will be?"

"It looks as though the Lord had marked it distinctly enough," replied Doctor Schurff, pointing to the unhappy Catharine.

But Margaret smiled contemptuously, and said: "Are you, too, one of those who think they can fathom the counsels of the Lord?—or of those who would bind the hands of the Almighty? If I tell you that my sister there will get up again, and the only victim will be myself, dare you contradict me?"

Saying this, Margaret grasped her sister's hand, and covered it with her kisses and tears. "You dare not die, Catharine," she cried. "As long as I can weep, I will cool the fever of your body with my tears."

The physician drew Leonard aside, and said to him: "Margaret is dangerously excited. I know you have influence over her. I beg you, for God's sake, try your best to remove her from the room. If she refuses, use force. I cannot permit her to remain here any longer."

But even before Leonard could obey the physician's directions, Margaret was forced by Catharine herself to leave the sick-bed. The sick girl was seized with another and more violent attack of frenzy, which threatened to culminate in raving madness. She sprang up, striking about her with her hands, as if she were fighting desperately for her life. She ejaculated awful sounds, as of some mysterious language; wild glances darted from her sunken eyes. Terror and de-

spair seemed to crush the unhappy girl into the lowest depths.

Then Catharine sank back upon her bed, her heaving bosom alone giving signs of life.

"The first struggle is over," now said Dr. Schurff, pointing to Catharine. "Do you see here at the neck, under the chin, on the arms, here, there—they are shooting up like deadly fungi? Do you see the white, black, dark-yellow, putrid blisters?—that is the plague in its second stage! God be merciful to the poor girl!"

"Do you see it?" now cried Margaret, breaking out into passionate, almost delirious rejoicing. "Do you see it? Catharine is not the victim—she will be saved. You said, Doctor, that when the plague-boils appear my sister is safe. I tell you, Catharine is not the victim; but I—I shall be."

"Margaret, dear, dear Margaret," now said Fichtner, grasping both her hands, "you know that the Lord apportions life and death according to his good pleasure. You have often told me that a Christian must not pray for either life or death. But what are you doing? You wish to die, and you do not know whether it be God's will or not. Come, dear Margaret, you are excited—your hands are burning and fevered—come with me."

But Margaret shook her head, and said: "You have told me, Leonard, that you love me. Is this your love, that you ask me to leave my sister in her suffering?"

"You really do not leave her," rejoined Leonard. "You know that the light of reason is extinguished in your sister; she neither hears nor sees your sighs and your tears. You, like the rest of us, can do nothing;

but what you can do better and more effectually than all of us, is best done in the quiet of your closet. Pray for your poor sister there. Spare yourself; think of the solemn words: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' If the Lord wishes to make you the victim, he knows how to seek you wherever you may be. Margaret, can you not think that *your* life is *my* life."

The blind girl still stood irresolute, drooping her head on her breast in thought, when the door opened, and MARTIN LUTHER entered.

"You have a dying girl in your house," he said, as he took all in at a glance; "the people are speaking of it on the street." Then he approached the sick-bed, and for a moment recoiled at the horrible sight. "Doctor Augustine," he now said to the physician, "is there any hope?"

"But little, reverend sir," replied the latter. "If the boils and blisters do not suppurate speedily, then death holds his victim with a sure hand. But," he continued, turning to LUTHER, and addressing him in a lower tone: "the Lord sends you this time, as he always does. I entreat you to persuade the blind girl yonder to leave the room; she is the dying girl's sister, and stubbornly refuses to leave the chamber. Her mind is in a state of the greatest excitement. If she does not soon go out into the fresh air, and take some strengthening medicine, we will assuredly have a second victim."

"The Lord has already provided," replied LUTHER; and then turning to the blind girl, he said: "Why, this is my dear friend Margaret," taking her hand in his cordial grasp.

The very first word spoken by LUTHER had caused Margaret to recognize him by the sound of his loved voice, and had sent a joyous thrill through her heart. But when the man she loved so dearly stood so near her, and when she felt for the first time the pressure of his hand, her whole soul was transferred into love and reverence. Her knees trembled; she sank down, and pressed the hem of his garment to her lips as she said: "In your presence, the only place for me is *here* at your feet, man of God."

LUTHER shook his head earnestly, grasped the kneeling girl with both hands, and said solemnly: "Margaret, there is only ONE, before whom and in whose name every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth. Beware lest you deny Christ! Arise, and take away from me and from yourself the sin against the first commandment."

"You are angry with me!" said Margaret, rising in deep sadness.

"No, my daughter," rejoined LUTHER, mildly and kindly. "I will only remind you that the Canaanitish woman kneeled at Christ's feet only, and not at the feet of his disciples. But what are you doing here, Margaret? You are doing what is not your duty. There is but One who can afford aid here to your sick sister, and he will hear you wherever you call on him. Master Lucas was just now with me; he wishes you to come to him. His dear child, Ursula, is sick with fever, and insists on you praying with her. You, my dear Milanese, will doubtless not permit any one else to lead the blind girl to the house of the chamberlain. Go then, dear Margaret, and may you experience anew

that the children of God always have the dear angels as friends and servants."

"Bless me, my father," Margaret now besought him again, falling on her knees. My soul is sad at the thought of leaving my sister."

"Go in peace, my daughter," said LUTHER, laying his hand on her head; "let not sadness arise within you; it weakens faith, and widens the breach between the will of God and the will of our carnal nature. Go and learn what the Lord's word means: 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.' The Lord bless thee and keep thee!"

Margaret now arose, and, accompanied by Leonard, left the room quietly and with resignation to the will of God.

During this short interval Catharine had been measurably quiet, but the plague had made horrible progress, short as the time had been. Blister on blister, boil on boil, covered the sufferer's whole body, as with black and yellow fungous growths. The face itself, with the exception of the forehead and the cheeks, was covered with them, more especially the neck, which was entirely overspread with swollen, hard and shining carbuncles. The poor girl had become perfectly unrecognizable. Dark-blue, half-curdled blood flowed from her mouth and nose.

The unhappy girl was to experience every horror of this horrible disease. Although her speech remained unintelligible, yet the loud, despairing moans and cries betrayed that she was conscious of her sufferings.

"What hope have you?" LUTHER asked the physician.

"None whatever now," replied the latter. "The time in which recovery was still possible is past. Yes," he continued, after he had regarded the sick girl with closer scrutiny, "death has already begun its work. God, in his grace and mercy, will soon, very soon, release her. The death-struggle of the plague is only a brief one. We can do nothing more than pray to God to send a speedy release."

LUTHER now drew nearer to the dying girl, laid his hand on her burning forehead, and said: "Catharine Homberger, do you know me?"

At this she opened her hitherto closed eyes, and looked around with a stare. Gradually the wild stare faded from her eyes, and gave way to a look of indescribable sadness. When LUTHER had repeated his question, she opened her mouth, and uttered an awful inarticulate sound, but which was unmistakably intended to express an emphatic "*Yes.*"

"Catharine," now continued LUTHER, "are you prepared to die? And is it your desire to be saved solely by the merits of your Saviour Jesus Christ?"

The dying girl repeated the same awful, unintelligible sound, gradually raising her voice, as though she wished to put forth all her remaining strength. As she herself probably felt that her speech might not be understood, she gave a faint signal with her hand. LUTHER understood it, and laid his right hand in hers, notwithstanding that her whole hand was covered with the loathsome black and yellow sores. He felt a slight pressure, the assent of her heart to the sound that passed her lips.

"And are you willing to die?" LUTHER further

asked. "Do you rejoice to enter into the glory of the Lord?"

At this a bright gleam of holy happiness and content flashed across her eyes, and passed away in an upward look toward heaven.

"And now, my daughter," said LUTHER, with all the hearty faith that belonged to him, "be of good cheer, we will pray with you."

LUTHER then fell on his knees beside the bed, whilst the physician stood on the other side with folded hands and devout heart, his eyes resting on the dying girl.

LUTHER now began to pray: "Merciful, gracious God and Lord, thou art the support of the weary and the strength of the weak; we cast our burdens on thee; for thou hast promised to sustain us, and thou wilt not suffer the righteous to be disturbed forever. Behold, O Lord, how great the distress is, where no one but thyself can save. Deliver us now, O Lord, and we will praise thee. Be near to this poor soul, who waits on thee, and deliver her from all evil, and preserve her unto thy heavenly kingdom. Almighty God, thou Father of mercy, thou God of all comfort, show us that thou art our Father, and have mercy on this thy poor child, as a father pitieth his children. The distress is great, but thy mercy is greater. Thou didst permit thy Son to become man for the sake of this poor girl also, so that he might die for her sins, and rise again for her justification. Do thou graciously receive her, who commends her soul to thee, and who wishes forever to remain thy dear child in thy grace.

"Lord Jesus Christ, our sole Helper, our final Comforter, O, thou who didst bear our griefs and wast wounded for our transgressions, thou Lamb of God, who bearest the sins of the world, be the righteousness of this thy hand-maid also, be her sanctification and her redemption. Hear the mute sighs of her bruised heart, wipe away her tears, thou Heavenly Physician, with the balsam of thy word, with the oil of gladness of thy promise. Take away her pain by thy wounds, let thy innocent blood not be lost on her, and take not thy Holy Spirit from her. Behold, O Lord, what is all our might: we cannot save in bodily suffering, much less in distress of the soul. Thou must come up to our help in the conflict, and conduct the poor soul unto victory. Forsake her not in her last need; behold her affliction and her pain, and help her as thou canst and wilt, help her speedily even unto everlasting life. Receive her into thy arms, O thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive her and bear her into thy heavenly kingdom. Let her see thy glory.

"God, Holy Spirit, thou who art the comforting Helper of all the afflicted, visit this poor girl with the light of thy peace. Strengthen and comfort her sad and dejected heart, preserve her faith in the Lord, who has sent thee as the promised Comforter, to lead us into all truth. Come forth on the field with thy army of many thousand angels and chosen ones, that they may protect the soul of this dying girl against the terrors of death, of sin, and of hell. Let her not be afraid of death, nor despair when the last struggle begins. Let her faithfully and patiently continue unto the end, that she may be saved; and do thou make her glad and

willing to be obedient to God, her Lord, even unto death. Enlighten, strengthen, comfort her, so that she may end her life in bliss and happiness, and that her heart and mind may be kept in the peace of her Lord and our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Behold, O thou merciful God and Lord, who knowest our thoughts afar off, and who triest the heart and the reins, who understandest the lisping of the child, and the speech of this dying girl; behold, O Lord, this thy handmaid can only address thee with her looks and cry unto thee with her sighs. Hear her; hear us, O thou almighty Helper, in our last distress; preserve and seal the remembrance of the holy name of Jesus in her heart, and let her fall asleep blissfully in him. Amen."

During this prayer, much as his whole soul participated in the intercession made in behalf of the dying girl, the physician had noted the rapid progress of the dissolution, thinking that death would release Catharine even before LUTHER had said Amen. The dying girl lay as though dead; her eyes half closed, her mouth open. The sufferings of body and of mind were overcome; her bosom no longer heaved, life no longer battled against death, but had yielded itself up, and passed away with the last breath.

"Has she obtained deliverance?" asked LUTHER, when he had arisen, and observed the dying girl more closely.

"The bodily functions are broken up," replied the physician; "but it is possible that her soul still lingers on earth."

The heavy tread of a man was suddenly heard at the

door, and before Doctor Schurff could hasten out to insist upon a decorous quiet, the door was opened noisily, and Master Homberger entered. He looked around in vague surprise, like one to whom everything he sees is entirely new. He looked now at the physician, then at LUTHER, again at the sick-bed, and betrayed increasing agitation. He then approached the bed, and when he saw the loathsome appearance of his dying child, the clouds fell like scales from his eyes. He seized his head with both hands, looked around in despair, and finally cried in a tone of the deepest consternation: "For the sake of God's mercy, what is all this? What are you doing here? Who is this woman that lies here?"

"Do you not know your own child?" asked LUTHER, with serious tone and expression.

Torn with conflicting emotions, the old man now threw himself down on the bed, embraced his dying daughter, and said: "Catharine, is it really you? I adjure you by the living God, answer me."

And lo! the dead face regained consciousness, the eye-lids parted, an indescribably clear and brilliant look shone forth from them, a blissful smile, such as touches the cheeks of mortals at no other time, overspread her face, and the dying girl opened her mouth, and in a low tone, but clearly and distinctly, said: "Father—Margaret—Christ alone."

Hardly had these words crossed her lips, when the smile disappeared, and the eyes were wrapt in the dark night of death. An awful, horrible rattling sound forced its way from the depth of the throat—one more spasm of the head, and the separation between body and soul was complete.

"Thanks be to thee, O Lord, thou faithful God," prayed LUTHER, making no attempt to check the tears which sought their way down his cheeks. "Let me, too, thus depart in peace, and dying behold thy glory, as this thy handmaid has done."

But when Homberger saw what had taken place, he kept his gaze fixed on his dead daughter, and at last said, gloomily: "Judgment has come upon me. God be merciful to me, a poor sinner!"

But LUTHER turned to the physician, and said: "Do you see after this poor man's body. The hour is probably near when I may care for his soul." Saying this, he softly left the room.

When LUTHER had returned to the Augustinian convent, he first entered his wife's room, and gave her an account of the death of Catharine Homberger.

"And was she willing to die?" asked Madame Catharine.

"Oh, yes," replied LUTHER. "I am sure that the promise of the Lord has been fulfilled in her case, and that she has not tasted death. I believe that real, genuine despair consists in this, that we taste death, that is, feel death with fear and trembling, and know, amid anxiety and torments, that we are dying. How great a pain it must be to taste death, can easily be seen in the case of Christ, when he says: "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death." I take these words of Christ to be the greatest in the whole Bible, although those are also wonderful words which he cried out on the cross: 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?' No one can clothe in words, no angel understands how the Lord wrestled with death, and

grew more and more earnest in prayer; and how his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. Ah, dear Kate, it is a great comfort for us poor men, that the Lord tasted death for us, and bore these pains of death in our stead. Henceforth the Christian will taste death no more."

"Do you think," asked his wife, "that we are no more subject to any fear of death? Have I not seen faithful Christian souls tremble in view of death?"

"Yes," answered LUTHER, "many good, pious Christians, who ought by no means to be in fear, are certainly very much afraid of death, for the wicked are the only persons whom death should terrify. But when a good man is in dread of death, the Lord is never far distant, and is sure to take away the terror by saying: 'Fear not; for I have redeemed thee.'"

"Do not blame my weakness, dear husband," said the wife, "but I feel as though my hour too were not far distant, and I often feel very sad at heart."

"There you are not doing right, dear Kate," replied the husband. "You have every reason to be glad and to thank God heartily for protecting and preserving you so graciously up to this time. The pestilence has only threatened us, but has not carried any of us off. The two girls are saved; my faithful old Wolff is well again; the terror of death has fled from our convent. Then be of good cheer, and think of the Lord's words: 'A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, but afterward she has a glad heart.'"

"I do think of it," she replied, "but it will not take away the fear altogether."

"Hope and wait," said LUTHER, comforting her.

"Since we know that Christ is our Lord and that we are baptized in his name, why should we then be afraid of death? Even if death should come to us—well, then we will die in God's name; it is no evil to us; only see, dear Kate, how even the heathen could picture death so lovely that they did not fear it. I have but to-day, at the deathbed of Catharine Homberger, seen how cruel, horrible, and ill-favored death is, and yet the heathen have described it so beautifully, have had so little dread of it, or rather held it up to be a glorious and wonderful experience. Why should not we Christians do this much more than they? The poor heathen knew less than nothing about the life of eternal bliss. But we know that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. We know that Christ hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, we know that if Christ is our life, death can only be our gain, and yet we fear and are greatly terrified, when some one speaks to us of death, or any seeming danger of death arises."

"Have patience, dear husband, with my weakness," entreated Madame Luther. "I might tell you that I am not afraid of death itself, nor without a desire to depart and to be with Christ; but the form in which death presents itself to us in this evil time of pestilence excites a horror in me, which I cannot well get rid of."

"Let this not terrify you, dear Kate," said LUTHER, to comfort her. "Terror, such as you feel, is salutary, and I, too, am not free from it myself. It is our evil nature that causes this. This terror can easily be re-

moved by the three words: '*Miserere mei, Deus!*'—God, be gracious to me. He who can speak such good words is well off; for a wicked man cannot say a single good word in death. There is no better death than that of St. Stephen, who says: 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' All the lists of our sins and of the merit of our works are then laid aside, and the Christian dies in sole reliance on the grace of Christ."

As LUTHER ceased speaking, his little son came in through the door of the adjoining room, and ran towards his father with outstretched arms.

"Hans, my dear little Hans," cried the father, drawing the child toward himself, and kissing his eyes, his mouth and his cheeks. "Look, Kate," he continued, with heart-felt joy, "our little Hans will certainly rejoice in the prospect of death, when we shall tell h m that he will then go to heaven, where there is no end of eating and dancing, where the waters taste like milk, and cakes grow on the trees. Children will go directly to Paradise. Even here on earth they are the happiest and best off. They have no temporal cares; they do not see the abominable fanatics and factionists in the church; they do not suffer the terrors of death or hell; their thoughts are all pure, and their conceits are happy. Let us be so too, dear Kate, as much as we can. Well," he said, turning to his little son, "have you nothing to tell me to-day? Speak, Hans, tell me what you have been thinking. Make a noise, Hans, if you cannot talk." Saying this, LUTHER, putting his finger in the child's mouth, recited to the pleased Hans the old nursery rhyme:

"A kitten I saw on the steps over yon,
A little red jacket that kitten had on;
A knife hung down at her side:
'Pray whither,' I asked, 'will you ride?'
'I must hie me quickly to Bulemann's house,
And there I shall get me a fine, fat, young mouse,
Quick, quick, quick, quick!'"

Whilst Hans was laughing aloud, and his father too, Madame Catharine suddenly gave an anxious start, seized LUTHER'S hand, quickly drawing it back from the child's mouth, and said: "For God's sake, dear husband, what are you doing? You have come away from one who died of the plague, and have doubtless touched her face with that very hand. I trust in God you have not infected our poor little boy with the plague."

LUTHER now was thoroughly alarmed at what he had done: "You are right, dear Kate, I ought not to have done this; but God knows I did it thoughtlessly. For this once I pray God to pardon me; for I did not intend to tempt him. Be calm, Kate; it will not harm the child. I thought no more of what I was doing than did Hans."

"May God grant me your courage, dear husband," answered his wife.

"Ask, and it shall be given unto you," answered LUTHER affectionately, pointing with his hand toward heaven.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOMBERGER'S CONFESSION.

"Blessed is he, whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Ps. xxxii. 1.

THE sudden and awful death of Catharine had shocked the unhappy father in the highest degree. The heavy veil which had thus far rested on his mind, and weighed him down, was all at once removed and his inner man set at liberty, opening unto him a full view into the depth of his distracted heart and burdened conscience.

The physician was obliged to force him away from the bed of his dead child, as no persuasion, no warning, no argument, could prevail upon him. He tore his hair, and wept and cried unceasingly in the agony of despair: "O, Catharine! my child, my daughter."

When the corpse was borne from the house in compliance with the orders of the authorities, so as to commit it to the earth as soon as possible, he tried his utmost to interfere with the bearers, begging and entreating, and finally even uttering threats against them, until at last the physician and Leonard succeeded in leading him back into his room. Speak to him as you would, he heard it not, he paid no attention to it. "Give me back my child," was the constant cry which came from his heart, distracted with a father's grief.

He spent the greater part of the day in the room in which Catharine had died. He walked up and down

restlessly, at times speaking to himself aloud, again tormenting himself with the silent accusations of his conscience. "It cannot be," he cried repeatedly, "she cannot be dead! She was the dearest child I had, and was always so well and so full of life, and I expected *her* to close *my* eyes.

"There is something supernatural about this," he continued, shivering as with cold. "Something dreadful has happened! A crime! I did not know that Catharine was sick, and that she had to die. I could not even pray for her. O what a night hangs over me! Something must have happened to drive me to despair, and then to take the memory of it away from me. Part of my life is surely wanting—I feel it. But whither has it gone? O, Lord God, preserve my reason for me; I feel that it is leaving me. Horrible shadows dart across my soul; they seem to stretch forth rapacious hands, eager to seize me in their grasp.

"I must be ill," he began again. "Yes, certainly, I am surely sick, and perhaps I must die. Catharine will draw me after her into her grave. Alas! I do not wish to die yet. Much remains for me to do. O, if I only had rest in my heart!"

Although Margaret had again taken up her abode at her home, this seemed to make no impression whatever on her father. He did not indeed avoid her, nor did he seek her company; and when he chanced to come nearer to her than usual, he turned away timidly and suspiciously, without saying a word to her. He had either forgotten that he had driven his poor daughter, oppressed with his curse, from the house, or

if he was conscious of the base deed, he clearly suppressed the recollection, and at least did nothing toward carrying out the horrible threats he had uttered.

Margaret was deeply sensible of the impression which her presence must make on her father. She therefore endeavored to avoid all intercourse with him; and though she was sad because her father paid no attention to her, yet she bore this last crowning mortification in the glad hope that all her sufferings would be righted at last. She consoled and encouraged her sinking heart by saying to herself: "*I know it cannot now be otherwise.* The hour will come when I shall rest on his bosom, and for this I shall wait in patience."

"Leonard was the only one in the house with whom Homberger maintained any communication; but in an entirely different way from what he had formerly done. Not that the old master approached the young man with cordiality—the nervous, suspicious manner still predominating whenever his eye fell on Leonard; but the sulky defiance, the contemptuous expression of his face, had disappeared. Besides, Homberger neither spoke about his personal affairs nor even about his art, but concerning ordinary matters, which allowed of no reference to the state of his feelings, or to anything that had occurred in the house.

This continued for three days. On the morning of the fourth day Margaret in vain waited for her father's entrance into the sitting-room, where he was in the habit of taking his breakfast.

In the anxiety of her heart she called Leonard from the workshop, and earnestly entreated him to look after her father.

Leonard quietly stepped into the chamber, the door of which was not locked, and saw that the old master was lying on the bed.

"Are you sick, dear Master Homberger?" inquired Leonard, in a tone of heartfelt concern.

"I suppose I am sick," he answered, with hesitation. "I have no pain, it is true, but I am so weary, and my heart is so heavy. Leonard, do you know anything about diseases? Tell me, am I really sick? Look at me: do you believe that I must die?"

"Surely not now," replied the young man, confidently. "I understand but little about the nursing of the sick, but I believe that you are probably more ill in mind than in body. Do you wish me to call in Doctor Schurff?"

"No, no," exclaimed Homberger, quickly and excitedly. "What do I want with the physician? He could not save my child, and she was so young; how will he cure an old man?"

"But," objected Leonard, "suppose you really should require the aid of a physician? A little prevention will often be effectual."

"Cease to speak of that man!" cried the master, vehemently. "I know that he cannot help me. What do I want with the doctor? If he could and would restore my child to life, then would I believe in him."

Directly afterward he became quite calm again, and said in a tone which was almost beseeching: "Leonard, do not be offended at my vehemence; I did not wish to hurt you. Come nearer, I have something to ask you."

When Leonard had approached nearer, the master looked him sharply in the eye; but soon lowered his

glance, and said: "Then you do not believe that I must die? Tell me honestly, Leonard. I am no child, I am a man—I have had a large experience; I could tell you things at which your hair would stand on end. Conceal nothing from me. If the end is come, so be it. I am an honest man, and have done much good; I can go to my grave fearlessly. Perhaps you think that I am afraid of death? O, no! there is rest in the grave, and I am in need of rest—yes, of much rest. No, Leonard, I am not afraid." His looks and movements, his whole outward appearance, gave the lie to his boasting words. The tremor of his voice, the restless movements of his head and hands, revealed the most abject fear of death.

"You are deceiving me," continued Homberger, anxiously, when Leonard failed to give him an immediate answer; "you understand diseases, and refuse to say so. You see by my appearance that I am near death. Tell me unhesitatingly, can you give me a guarantee that I shall not die just now?"

"What are you asking of me, a poor mortal?" answered Leonard. "You ask and demand of me what no one but the Lord of life and death knows and possesses. No one on earth can guarantee your life for a single hour. But permit me to tell you, dear master, and it is the most heartfelt sympathy which urges me to say so—if your hour is really near, then you are not properly prepared to meet death as a Christian. Beware, lest you comfort yourself with a false comfort! In death all self-deception is at an end."

"Now you speak truly" said Homberger, in anxious haste; "you know that my hour is near, but you wish

to spare me the terror of anticipation. Leave me, Leonard: you are no better than the rest. Go, go! why do you still stand there? Do you wish to steal the few hours which are yet before me? If I *must* die, I want no witnesses. Go! I do not need your help. Yes, I am not sick at all. I will show you that I am well and strong. I will get up and go to work."

At this he made an attempt to raise himself from his couch; but he fell back at once into the bed powerless. Then the tears started from his eyes.

"You are cruel, Leonard," he now said; "you ought to feel with me; but you mock at my torments. If you know how I may be cured, tell me. I will follow your directions."

"O," cried the young man, "how hard it is for you to believe in any good emotion of my heart, in my Christian sympathy for you. There is but one soul in this house to whom I yield, and that scarcely, the precedence as regards love to you."

"No more of this—no more of this," rejoined Homberger, anxiously hindering him from speaking further on this subject. "Do not shun me, Leonard: I will tell you in spite of yourself; I will confide in you. Tell me, where I can find help in my distress? I am not so very poor as you may think. I will tell you. I have saved a few thousand guilders, earned in the good times; I will tell you where I buried them. I can recompense you for your advice and aid."

The young man shook his head, smiling sadly, and then said: "Well, then, dear Master Homberger, I certainly know where there is help for you in counsel and deed. It is true you do not wish to hear about

this physician; nevertheless I tell you that there is but one physician who can cure you, and that is DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER."

Hardly had Leonard pronounced this name, so distasteful to the old carver, when Homberger started violently. "No, no!" he cried with vehemence. "I am a faithful son of my Church, and I will not fall into the hands of this heretic. If you can offer no better advice, you may go."

This stubbornness, like a rock against which every vessel, coming up with help and comfort, was sure to be shattered, made the young man sad, and robbed him of the courage to continue his efforts for the welfare of poor Homberger. Not so much in obedience to the command of the old master, but rather because he wished to consult with Margaret as to the proper course under the circumstances, did Leonard turn his back and slowly leave the room. Hardly had he reached the head of the stairway, when he heard Homberger's voice, anxiously and loudly calling out his name. He turned about in haste, and asked the sick man what he wished.

"You are cross-grained, Leonard," said the Master. "You run away, although you well know that I was not in earnest. See here, you mentioned the name of that arch-heretic who lives here in Wittenberg. Among many evil things, I have heard some few good things about him. They say that he is very severe, and that he has little sympathy with the sick and dying, and that his words are like poisoned arrows."

"Who has given you such an account of the dear man of God?" inquired Leonard. "Believe me, dear

master, whoever told you such falsehoods about Doctor MARTIN was neither *his* friend, nor *your* friend. All the people of Wittenberg are attached to him, and with them the half of Christendom. Do you think that all these value the rest and peace of their hearts so lightly as to permit themselves to be pierced by poisoned arrows out of LUTHER'S mouth? And do you know who prepared your Catharine for death, so that she died happy and blessed? It was this very MARTIN LUTHER, whom you despise as a heretic."

"If I only knew that he would not be hard on me," cried Homberger, undecidedly. "Look you, Leonard," he continued, with increasing abjectness; "I went to confession diligently and of my own accord, and thought highly of absolution, and submitted to every penance laid upon me in expiation of my sins. You might go to him, and tell him that I am naturally timid, and that he should not speak too harshly to me. You may tell him," he went on with more confidence, "all I have suffered, even for the short time you have been here, and that I have lost my dear daughter, Catharine, and that he ought to pity me. Don't you think, Leonard, that he will treat me kindly, when you have told him all this?"

"How you deceive yourself in your estimate of this great and good man!" answered the youth; "you fear his person, and the words of his mouth. Do you not know that LUTHER does not speak of his own prompting; but that he draws every word from the Word of God, be it doctrine, or reproof, or comfort? But I shall repeat to him what you direct me to say to him."

When Leonard was again on the point of leaving

the room, Homberger called after him nervously: "Stay a little while yet; it is not necessary to attend to the matter to-day. I may get better, you know. To-morrow, Leonard, or the day after to-morrow."

"To-morrow, or the day after," repeated the young man, sorrowfully. "Are you then so very sure that you will have the opportunity to morrow or the day after? *You* say that it is not necessary to-day; and *I* think the sooner one's heart obtains peace with God the better."

"What are you driving at?" cried Homberger, vehemently. "Do you take me to be such a very great sinner—one who has no peace with God? I should like to know what charge you can bring against me? What evil on my part do you know of? Don't hesitate to speak out. Yet you are right," he continued, with a sudden change of tone; "I suppose I am more ill than I thought, and if I can procure help *to-day*, it is better than to wait until to-morrow. You may go to Doctor Schurff then, and if you should happen to see the other Doctor too—I mean, the one—the one who lives in the convent—if you see him accidentally—well, if he should feel inclined to pay me a visit, I should not exactly oppose it."

Leonard, whose heart sunk at the old man's comfortless and distracted state of mind, deemed it advisable to go at once to Father LUTHER, and proceeded without delay across the hall, and down the stairway, although Homberger once more called him back.

LUTHER was ready to accompany him on the instant, and Leonard on the way briefly repeated what he had already told the doctor about Homberger. But

LUTHER had retained it all clearly in his memory; and so in a very few minutes the doctor stepped into the sick man's room.

When Homberger saw enter the man whom he feared as his judge, he was plainly disturbed, and turned his eyes away.

But LUTHER was not disconcerted by this rude reception, but advanced, holding out his hand, and said, heartily and kindly: "God be with you, Master Homberger."

The old man's reply was unintelligible. He extended his hand to LUTHER slowly and laboriously, as if he could not raise it from the bed.

"You are sick," continued LUTHER, seating himself on a chair beside the bed, in such a position that he could look the sick man full in the face. "Sickness is a heavy burden. No one submits to it unless he must. What ails you, dear master? Have you much pain? Or, mayhap, your sickness is great bodily weakness?"

"Weakness, mere weakness," replied Homberger, ungraciously.

"And how long is it since you felt this weakness?" asked LUTHER. "I mean," he added, kindly, when the invalid looked at him as though he did not know what to say, or as if he had not understood the question, "I mean, is it long since you were so weak, and confined to your bed?"

"Long, long," replied Homberger, in the same dull manner; but he soon added: "I have been sick longer than I have kept my bed, for great troubles have befallen me; I have lost my dear child, and my wife, too; and besides, my life has abounded in sad experi-

ences. I was but a boy of ten, when my father and mother both died, and I had a hard time of it from my childhood up; and there are probably but few people in the world who have had as hard a life as mine."

"And how did you bear all this?" asked LUTHER, pleased, but not expressing his thought, because the sick man had at least begun to converse.

"How *should* I have borne it?" exclained Homberger. "I have always lived an honest life, and I should like to see the man who could say anything against my character. I understand my art, and I can prove by letters that I have worked honestly. I am not a stingy man. I have served many a poor village church without pay, assisted many a poor journeyman in need. At one time, I remember, one came to me whom I relieved by giving him clothing, and shoes, and money, and other necessaries; and I have the letter to this day, which he wrote me from Nuremberg, thanking me for the kindness I had shown him. But you must read the letter yourself."

"My dear master," rejoined LUTHER, when he saw the sick man raise himself, and reach toward the cupboard at his side, "what do I care about that? I do not doubt the truth of what you have told me. But *that* is not what I wished to know. You told me you had experienced many sad and evil days during your life, and then I asked you how you had borne your trouble—quietly and patiently, or with a rebellious heart?"

"What do you mean by *evil* days?" asked Homberger, quickly and rudely.

"Evil days," answered LUTHER, calmly, "are such

days as come with all kinds of bodily and spiritual trials and temptation, so that we often think we cannot bear them, and are tempted to despair; and they are often called evil days for this reason, too, that they leave behind them much evil, and urge on to evil."

"I have gone through much in my life," said Homberger, evasively, and casting a sullen look of anger toward LUTHER.

"And did you bear it so that it became a blessing to you?" asked the latter.

"Yes, yes," the sick man promptly replied, "it was hard on me, but God has always blessed me in my business. It is true, I am not rich, but I have never been in want of food, clothing and shelter. I had many friends, too, but many of these have died. Oh, if they were still alive, they could all bear me the best of testimony. At one time I could have become a member of the city council of Wittenberg, but I declined to accept the honor. Ten or twelve years ago I was sick with a bad fever, and suffered much. Yes, sir, I must say that I have passed through much affliction in my life, and I suppose there are but few that have suffered more than myself."

"And do you regret that you have suffered so much?" inquired LUTHER, fully determined to catch and to hold the invalid in his own words.

"No, replied Homberger, quickly. "I am enough of a Christian to know the best of men are often obliged to endure the greatest sufferings. And this is my comfort in my present bodily weakness. I am in hopes that it will not last long."

"May God grant it," said LUTHER. "Yet I would

not have you place too sure a reliance on this; no calculation is more unreliable than that in which the Lord has a word to say, and many a thing looks trifling and small, which in the end may be very difficult."

"Sir, what do you mean by that?" cried Homberger, alarmed and anxious; "do you think that I have the plague? I know that my child died of it. Sir, if you know, tell me, so that I may send for a physician. Your look at me is full of doubt. I am not indeed afraid of death, but still I would like to live a few years longer—not for my own sake, but for the sake of my daughter Margaret; for I have another child, a blind child, who would be altogether forsaken if I were to die. And I may as well tell you, dear sir, so long as my Catharine lived—yes, what was I going to tell you?—yes, if I consider the matter rightly, I did perhaps treat poor, blind Margaret—I wished to say because Margaret is blind, therefore—oh, sir, do not be offended, my thoughts are becoming confused, and I am so disturbed in my mind—sir, I do hope that I have not the plague."

"Poor man," said LUTHER, smiling sadly. "So far as my knowledge of medicine goes, you are entirely free from it; but if you do not overcome this anxiety and restlessness, it is more than possible that you may become seriously ill.

"Master Homberger," he now continued, affectionately and persuasively; "you are indeed weak in body, but still more so in mind. When the mouth speaks, the heart is relieved. Every man has *some* experience in life which impresses itself more deeply than others, and can never be altogether forgotten. Tell me *this*,

and trust me as an honest man, who will not abuse your confidence."

Homberger, tormented by conflicting emotions, gazed about him, and anxiously exerted himself to calm the storm that surged within his breast, but unsuccessfully. At length he said: "You may be right, dear sir; I, too, have had an experience which I can never forget, much as I should like to do so. It is now about thirty years since I was in Italy, for the sake of perfecting myself in my art, and finally resided for a time in the city of Milan; and there something happened to me, which to this day will not suffer me to rest. I have tried everything; but I cannot stifle the remembrance; and yet believe me, dear sir, I am innocent. You do not believe me—you look at me as though you suspected me."

"I am only awaiting your narrative," answered LUTHER, calmly. "Collect your thoughts a little, dear master, and accept my assurance that I shall not betray your confidence. I am a servant of God, my Lord, and I am called to bring comfort and peace to troubled minds. Trust me therefore."

"Well then," Homberger resumed, "a certain *Leonardo Pinetta* was jealous of me, on account of a young lady, and felt sorely aggrieved that a poor German journeyman should stand higher than himself in the good graces of a Milanese lady; and so he spread the rumor that she was engaged to him, thinking to break my heart with this shameful lie. And as Maria favored *my* suit, Pinetta's anger was roused beyond control, and he lay in wait to take my life. Then, of course, I defended myself—and God knows how it happened—I

came away unharmed, and Pinetta lay on the ground as though dead. See, dear sir, this is all; and I ought to be at peace, because I simply defended my life, and who can ever know the issue of such a struggle? *One* must fall, you know—is it not so, sir? I am not to be blamed in this matter—am I?"

LUTHER was deeply pained at the absorbing anxiety of the man to clothe his crime in the garb of innocence. But being well acquainted with the human heart, he knew that the natural man clings to his own righteousness as long as he can, and that he can gradually live himself into a false peace and hypocritical justification so far as to take his shallow self-deception for truth; and knowing this, he was aware that a vigorous assault was necessary to break through the hard walls of this man's diseased conscience. But he was pleased that Homberger had at least begun to speak; and calculating with certainty that the stream of an opening conscience flows broader and broader, when it has once burst through its barriers, he did not purpose interrupting the first flow by the power of terror or of threats, but rather to bring out a full confession of sin gradually, by a little gentleness and kindness.

"I need not tell you, dear master," he began, "that innocence needs not comfort. St. Paul says: 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.' And in the presence of his accusers in the council at Jerusalem, he began his defence with these words: 'Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.' And to the Hebrews he writes: 'We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.' This made him be of

good cheer and glad. A good conscience makes the heart happy and peaceful. You must therefore, dear master, know best whether this is so in your case, as it was with St. Paul. You ask *me* whether any guilt attaches to you: now, what do you say for yourself?"

"I am innocent," replied Homberger, quickly; but soon after he resumed: "On one point, I may possibly be mistaken. People said that Pinetta was engaged to Maria, but I do not believe it was so; and even if that had been the case, I would be innocent all the same."

"No, no, master Homberger," said LUTHER, "if the young lady was actually engaged to Pinetta, you would not be altogether guiltless. Marriage is based on God's law, and where two persons are engaged, they have placed themselves under the law of God, and can rest assured of his blessing. If another steps between them, he parts that which has put itself under God, and has entered into a compact. Besides, such troth is not plighted without the will and consent of the parents, and the blessing of both father and mother rests upon those engaged. Any one therefore who interferes, attempts to take away this blessing and trample it under foot. If Pinetta was really betrothed to the young lady, and you knew this, you did wrong in endeavoring to sunder hearts that were joined together and were blessed by God and their parents. My dear master, do not deceive yourself in this matter. If you really desire peace of mind, you must renounce all false security, and not quiet yourself with an illusive righteousness. Besides, it will do you no good. If the consolation is unsound, it will not last, and will always leave you without rest."

"Yes," said Homberger, looking around uneasily, "you cannot believe, sir, how great my disquietude has been, and I cannot yet rid myself of it altogether. Would it really be a sin, if I had known that the two were betrothed?"

"Certainly," said LUTHER, "you sinned against the manifest command of God, who says: 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, or anything that is his own.' When I was still at school at Eisenach, my hostess once said to me: '*There is no dearer thing on earth than the love of a woman, if one can have it in the fear of God.*' It was long before I understood this saying aright; but when I began to understand, I blessed the dear woman for it. Many a misfortune would have been avoided on this earth if evil thoughts and desires had been suppressed at the right time."

"And can this sin be forgiven me, in case I had committed it?" inquired Homberger.

"Yes," answered the confessor. "If you really and truly acknowledge it to be sin against the express commandment of God, and sincerely repent of it and humbly long for the grace of God."

"Well," continued Homberger, earnestly, and with a conscience somewhat relieved, "when I think it over, it may be that the people spoke the truth."

"That is no open, honest confession, dear master," rejoined LUTHER, kindly and seriously. "If you knew that the young woman whom you coveted was betrothed to Pinetta, then you must make an honest confession of it, if you wish it to do you any good. You do not confess it to me, but to Almighty God, and *I* cannot give you peace, but the Lord only."

The old man cast one glance at his confessor, which plead for sympathy; but when he recognized the firm, unyielding will of the latter, he uttered a deep sigh, and said: "Yes, I will acknowledge it—I knew it; but the young woman was so lovely, and had captured my whole heart, and I would never have desired her favor if I had not known that at heart she was very friendly toward me. I know that she loved me more than she did Pinetta. Was it a sin that I rejoiced in her favor, and desired to win her for myself."

"Master Homberger," exclaimed LUTHER, earnestly, "you do not know with what you are charging this maiden. You wish to put away from yourself the sin of which you have just confessed yourself guilty, and to place it on her. If it were really as you state, then you make this worthy maiden one who had broken the troth plighted to her bridegroom, one who had taken the most serious step of her life frivolously, and engaged herself to a man whom she could not love, and one who trifled outrageously with the blessing of her parents, and with the Word of God, and rejoiced in the torments of her affianced. Master Homberger," continued LUTHER, with increasing earnestness, "you do not know how you dishonor yourself by this language. Any one who can accept the love of a woman who belongs to another, is not honest, does not know what true love is, and does not desire true love for himself. Have you considered all this, Master Homberger? Tell me now, was the Milanese lady really such a base girl—one of those who would to-day plight her troth to one man, and seek for another to-morrow?"

Homberger remained silent for a time, in which he

was unmistakably tormented by conflicting thoughts. At length he spoke, casting an almost reproachful glance at LUTHER: "The people are right. Your words are hard and sharp; they cut to the soul. You take pleasure in making me a sinner—you rejoice in the torments of a disturbed conscience."

"My poor, unhappy friend," cried LUTHER, with heartfelt sympathy, "I, too, have experienced the torments of a disturbed conscience, and I know what a burden unforgiven sins are; but inasmuch as I know, too, God be thanked, what fulness of life and salvation there is where there is forgiveness of sins, therefore, I hail this torment, because it finally, by the grace and mercy of God, leads to a blessed peace. But how little you know me and the Scripture on which I stand! The number of my enemies and adversaries, who would gladly silence me and bring me to the ground, is great and powerful; and the suffering and pain they have caused me can hardly be estimated. But you can believe me when I tell you that I do not wish my worst and bitterest enemy the pain of a heart torn by sin and unreconciled to God. When the angels of God mourn and weep, no genuine Christian can be glad. But let me tell you, my dear master, what you object to in me is that I, on the basis of God's word, reprove that as a sin, which you have perhaps for many long years regarded as an *innocent* deed. Hence you are angry at me, as if I rejoiced in your suffering; and yet I have no other wish than the peace of your heart. Answer me," he continued, in a friendly tone, "I will ask you a few questions: Did this Milanese maiden tell you, clearly and distinctly, that she loved you more than her betrothed?"

"No, she did not *exactly*," replied Homberger with hesitation.

"Well," continued LUTHER, "did she inform you by her looks, her expression, or her gestures? or did she in any other way act so as to cause you to believe so beyond doubt?"

"She was always very affable," answered Homberger, "she always addressed me so kindly, never once pained me, either by word or deed. Ah, sir," he went on excitedly, and as though thinking aloud, "she had such a dear, kind way with her, I could never look at her without feeling my whole heart quiver; and when I said that she never pained me, I did not express myself truthfully, for every word, every look of hers pained me! Oh, yes sir, she caused me nothing but pain."

"My friend," replied LUTHER, sadly, "you do not answer my question. I know very well what you mean; a lovely woman is a very pleasant sight; and a very precious thing, too, which howsoever much one may long to possess, yet he dare not, thereby causing him much grief and despondency; and the more he desire to have the precious possession, notwithstanding he knows that it belongs to another, the greater is the pain endured. But that is not what I wished to ask you. Was this woman bold and loud, brazen-faced and impudent? Did she seek you, go where you would? Did she tell one man that she loved him when she associated with another! Was she —?"

Long before LUTHER had finished, Homberger half raised himself up from his bed and looked at him with fierce and angry glances, and shouted fiercely: "What

do you mean? Maria Varchi was an angel, body and soul. You might just as well describe the Holy Virgin with such vile thoughts and words, as her. Maria Varchi's glances were innocence itself, her gestures modesty. How dare you use such language in speaking of her?"

"Then," rejoined LUTHER, with the dignity of a Nathan, "*thou*, Master Homberger, *thou alone art the man!* You knew that the maiden was betrothed to another; you knew that her innocent heart was incapable of unfaithfulness even in thought: but you pursued her with your impure love; you wished to separate her soul from her betrothed; you aimed to tear asunder what God and man had joined together; you were the wicked enemy who wished to sow tares among the wheat; your heart and conscience are sullied—and yet you dare to aver before the omniscient God that you are innocent! Fold your hands, and fall abject on your knees and pray: 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' And one word more: It was not Pinetta who lay in wait for you, but *you* for Pinetta. *You* thought in your sinful delusion that the bride would be yours when you had slain Pinetta. *You* fell on the unsuspecting man like an assassin, and thrust you dagger into his unsuspecting bosom. Answer me, if you can. Justify yourself, if you dare! I say that *you* are the murderer of Pinetta."

But the unhappy man could do neither. At first his eyes rolled wildly, as if wicked, murderous thoughts were passing through his brain. But the more sharply and unsparingly LUTHER'S words forced their way into his soul, the more was he crushed by the terrible

power of the truth. He tossed restlessly on his bed. The wild look of his eyes was changed to gloom and despair; his chest rose and fell, as it were, in spasms, and every feature of his face showed traces of an evil conscience, now fully awakened.

"Cease!" he now shouted. "For God's sake, say no more! What right have you to dive down into my soul? For thirty years I have atoned. You are a cruel, horrible man, to tear open a wound which a penance of thirty years had healed. And what you said is not true: I acted solely in self-defence."

"*You murdered Pinetta*," repeated LUTHER, firm as a rock.

"No! no!" screamed Homberger, in despair. "Who says so? Who is witness against me?"

"*The dead rise up and testify*," answered LUTHER. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. When Cain killed Abel, the blood of Abel cried out to God for vengeance, and the hand of God wrote on the brow of Cain the words: 'Thou hast slain thy brother.' Do you think that God's writing can be false? Do you know that you, too, carry on your forehead, in your looks, in your anxiety and remorse, the inscription of the all-just, avenging God? Miserable man, know you not that it is branded on your forehead, '*You have slain Pinetta?*'"

Homberger could no longer resist the awful force of his accusing conscience. He sprang from his bed, fell on his knees, wrung his hands frantically, and ejaculated: "*Yes, it is true, I did slay Pinetta!*" Then he sank down again in sudden exhaustion, and buried his face under the cover of the bed.

LUTHER for a time left the unhappy man to his harrowing remorse. He permitted the unburdened conscience to struggle, and wisely awaited the moment when his help as a minister of God would be needed to lift up the prostrate heart.

Not long, however, did Homberger remain in this enforced quiet, which was the result of physical exhaustion, rather than of mental tranquillity. He once more raised himself up, directed his anxious, imploring looks toward LUTHER, and said in tremulous and hesitating tones: "Doctor MARTIN—I have often heard you so called by those who love and esteem you, permit me, too, thus to address you—I have long avoided you, but, indeed, I have done you no harm; and if I have spoken aught against you, I did it thoughtlessly, and I would give much if I had not done so. I am but a common man, compared with you; yet the people say that you despise no one, and are on kindly terms with the poor and needy. Oh, how I long to have you for my friend, instead of my enemy!"

"Dear master," answered LUTHER, from his heart, "how can you entertain such an opinion of me? Why do you fear me as your enemy?"

"Oh," continued Homberger, in nervous haste, "give me your word on this, Doctor MARTIN; I will tell you —you are only the second person to whom I have revealed my secret. It is true I am an old man, but I am afraid of death, and I would not like to die yet. Doctor, be my good friend, my good patron and protector. Have pity on me, and do not betray my secret to the authorities—the fear and shame would kill me before the executioner could put the sword to my neck.

Have pity on me; you know I have lost my Catharine. Ah! that tears a father's heart—it was a fearful punishment. I am," he proceeded confidentially, and with a painful attempt at secrecy, "I am not so very poor in money and goods. The people, indeed, say that you think little of money and possessions; but you have a wife and child, and you are fond of doing good to others. I will gladly give you the half of what I am worth, and even more, if you will only accept it; but do not betray me—do not deliver me up to the executioner. I will henceforth be a perfectly upright man; I wll defend, by word and deed, you and your new religion against every one; I will do whatever you demand of me, if you only spare my body and my life."

"My poor, poor friend," cried LUTHER, sympathetically; "if the Lord God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but on the contrary desires that he turn from his sins and live, do you think that I, who am myself a poor, sinful man, who lives only by the mercy of God, would defeat the gracious and merciful will of God respecting yourself? *Judgment is the Lord's.*"

"Yes, yes!" said Homberger, "I know all that by sad experience. Do not imagine that I have not suffered the judgment of the Lord. When I fled from Milan, God sent his angels after me, so that I could not escape from him. And in the Tyrol they seized me, and cast me on a dangerous bed of illness, so that I thought I would have to die. And when I recovered consciousness after the lapse of many, many weeks, the people told me that I had spoken wildly during the fever, and among other things had said that I had

slain a man. I then sent for a priest, and told him that all I had said in my sickness was false, and I gave him two gold pieces, directing him to read a few masses for the benefit of my health. Eight days afterward I was able to get up, though still very weak and weary; but I gained in health daily, so that I could at length continue my journey."

LUTHER shook his head in grave disapproval, and said: "Was that all you did? Was this all your sorrow and repentance?"

"O, no, no!" answered Homberger, eagerly; "I did everything that holy mother church prescribes. Without rest, and beholding the ghost of the murdered man before my eyes day and night, calling me his murderer, I finally went to Augsburg to a priest, and confessed my crime to him; submitted to every penance he imposed, and did all I could to obtain absolution. After I had been absolved, I felt better for a few days; but it did not last—the image of the murdered Pinetta appeared to me again and again, in my waking hours and in my dreams, and clutched at me with his hands as though he would deliver me over to the executioner. I was nervous and fearful, my work was unsatisfactory; in the midst of the wildest excesses, horrible thoughts came into my mind, while my food and drink were like poison to me, gnawing away my life, and yet without destroying it."

"And how about your *penitence?*" asked LUTHER. "And how did you obtain the peace of sins forgiven?"

"I was instructed," said Homberger, "to seek the grace of God through good works; and I was not found wanting in this. I went to mass every day, I

prayed through my rosary thrice a day, I passed by no contribution-box without putting in a generous donation. I joined every pilgrimage in my neighborhood. Alone I traveled from one holy shrine to another, and vowed manifold gifts and offerings, solely to obtain rest and peace of heart. I let no beggar depart without a liberal present, and I went to the poor and sick in their miserable homes, and aided them all. But my remorse clung to me and accompanied me to my bed."

"Proceed, proceed," cried LUTHER.

"Then," continued Homberger, "I ran to a priest in my distress, and he told me that the grace of God and the forgiveness of sins are gained only through *penitence*, and that I must be truly sorry, and pray my rosary with a contrite heart. Accordingly I did this, weeping and mourning with loud lamentations and sighs, beating my breast the while, and calling upon the saints to bear witness and to look into my heart that they might see how sorry I was and how willing I was to give all my possessions, if I could but undo what I had so unhappily done. Often when I was worn out with my groans and sighs, and could hardly sleep for weariness, I excited myself vigorously, and pressed still a few more tears from my eyes. Then I had a few nights of quiet rest, due, I now feel, to extreme weariness of body; for as soon as I regained a little strength, the old unquenchable fire of remorse returned. No one can be more contrite than I was, but still it did no good. Sir, I have borne this torment for more than five-and-twenty years."

"Go on, go on," exclaimed LUTHER.

"Yes, dear sir," said Homberger, despondently. "That is still the cry within my breast: 'go on, go on,' still further. But I have never yet reached a point where there is rest and peace for my soul. Once more I ran to the priest and with tears informed him of my horrible sufferings. Upon which he told me that it was probably my own fault that I could not obtain rest, because I had trusted too surely in the forgiveness of my sins; that I must rather doubt whether my sins would be forgiven or not; for it was written: We know not who is acceptable to God and who is not; and that if in the midst of such doubting I were to do good works, I would find the greatly-desired rest for my soul."

"Well," inquired LUTHER, with a sorrowful smile and a shaking of his head, "well, did you do that? And did you find peace for your soul?"

"Alas! dear sir," replied Homberger, "it only increased my distress, and almost made me despair. I knew not *how* to despair. I tried to despair of the absolution I had received, and tried to persuade myself that the priest's words were untrue, and that they had no reference to my case. I got so far as to doubt whether the better thoughts which at times entered my soul were really good thoughts. O doctor, there were hours when I fancied that I would obtain rest if I were sure even of my *damnation.* And in such doubt, which made me more unhappy than the most terrible certainty, just think of it, *I was to do good works!* This was utterly impossible, for I now began to doubt whether the works I thought to be good, were really so. O sir, this period of my penitence was the most terrible of all!"

"Proceed, dear master, proceed still further," LUTHER cried, with emotion.

"O, do not mock at my torment!" pleaded Homberger, covering his face with both hands.

"I am not mocking," returned LUTHER. "I am only living my own torture over again in unison with you. Yes, my friend, all you have endured has been borne by myself, too. And knowing that it cannot end here, that the true comfort must come at last, I feel urged on to reach the end, for your own sake. Believe me, I have experienced what a torment it is to have a disturbed conscience, which cannot find peace. Proceed, then, dear master."

"Again I hastened to the priest," Homberger now continued, "and told him of my misery, and begged him on my knees, and with tears, to assist me in obtaining the comforting assurance that my sins had been forgiven. Then the priest scolded me for being unwilling to believe the holy mother church, nothwithstanding she possessed the power to convert eternal into temporal woe, and for this reason imposed on the sinner the rendering of satisfaction, and prescribed penances by which sin would be forgiven, if done in an obedient spirit. When I refused to believe this, because I had already faithfully performed all the works of penance, he scolded me again, and tried to persuade me that I must have committed other sins which I had not yet confessed, and which were therefore still unforgiven. I then tortured my conscience, and made sin of everything I had ever done or omitted, and even invented and confessed what I had never thought or done. And in this agony of soul I again fell ill, and

thought I must die—and death was almost welcome. But it was not God's will that I should die yet; I recovered, and arose from my sick bed this time in a defiant mood. I persuaded myself that my sin was not so very great after all, and that I, like everybody else, had a right to live. I pictured Pinetta to myself as one who had been my enemy, who had placed himself in the way of my happiness. I brought myself to look on his death as an accident, and an act of self-defence, and plunged into the vicious pleasures and enjoyments of the world. This relieved me for a time. I came hither to Wittenberg, established my business, and married. Then my first child was born—Margaret. When I looked into the child's eyes, I saw to my horror that she was *blind*. Sir, at that moment the grief of my wife cut me to the heart, and all my false and enforced peace was gone in a moment. *Your sins are not forgiven*—I said to myself—*This is the curse of your crime, which looks at you and pursues you in the unconscious glance of your child.* Sir, believe me, I besought God and all the saints to take the child from me. But to my sorrow Margaret grew apace, and was a healthy child, though at that very time there was great mortality among children. Death entered the houses of all my neighbors and friends, and took away here two and there three children, so that the parents were in despair because of their affliction. I had but one child, and would have regarded the death of my Margaret as an act of grace and a boon from God; but *my* one child remained alive—a source of awful torment to me. And then, when my wife was in hopes of a second child, I one day went and cast myself down

before the image of the Holy Virgin, and vowed to give her an altar and the half of my property, if she would only take from me my child—the blind accuser of my crime—and give me a perfect child instead of the sightless one; or, if I must retain Margaret, to let the birth of a healthy child be a sign that my sins were forgiven. And so it happened. When I took Catharine into my arms and beheld her beautiful form and her dear brilliant eyes—and I have never seen as brilliant an eye in any other child—I wept for joy, because my vow had found acceptance. I blessed the child, and accepted it as a seal that I had found grace. Catharine grew up, and continued to be the joy and solace of my heart and of my eyes. And as often as my blind daughter came in my way and disturbed my conscience with her sightless eyes, thus renewing my curse, I called Catharine to me, and pressed her to my bosom, and like one athirst drank rest and peace from her lovely bright eyes."

"This cannot be the end here," said LUTHER, when Homberger paused a moment from exhaustion. "Now more anxiously than ever I pray you, proceed."

"Yes, you are right," answered the master. "That was *not* the end. The death of my wife took hold of my heart like the hand of an inexorable judge; but I subdued the tumult in my breast, and found a sort of comfort in looking upon my Catharine. Then *you* came, Doctor, with your ninety-five theses against false repentance. At first I sided with you and your cause, because I imagined that I would be freed from the fetters of the church, which burdened my conscience; yet, let me acknowledge to you, I labored

under the delusion that your doctrine would abolish church-punishments and even the church itself, and free men from the fear of God and of his judgments. I sided with you, as with a bold adversary of the pope and the power of the papists, as with a new prophet, who would teach: *Fear God no longer, for there is no God.* That would have suited me exactly. But when I became aware that by receiving your doctrine I would be much worse off than before, and that I would then be obliged to fear God and his judgments in earnest, and would have to become *a new man*, then I hated you and your doctrine, and again became an adherent of the old mother church, which promised to lighten my repentance and to sell me the forgiveness of my sins at a reasonable price."

"Yes," said LUTHER, almost as if speaking to himself. "The world and the devil have sought to put my work to shame in various ways. Muenzer and his faction have, in my name, expelled the temporal authorities; the fanatics and sectaries would, in my name, crucify and blaspheme the word of God; lust and the will of the flesh bid me welcome, as one who tears down the judgment-seat of God and builds up an Epicurean religion; the pope and his servants even transform LUTHER into the chief of a band of robbers and murderers! This is a fearful combination against one poor worm, who desires nothing but God and his word—*God and his word alone.* The Lord says: 'Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.' In regard to my cause this means: 'When one man rises up against abuses and errors, then all to whom the right and the truth are repugnant

attach themselves to him.' It is a hard thing to try to raise up the fallen, for he bears down the one who would raise him up. But proceed, dear master. You surely cannot have reached the end yet."

"But I shall be there soon," said Homberger, quickly. "Do not think, doctor, that I have been blind and deaf to all that you have spoken and done here in Wittenberg. The more I understood your intentions, the more I hardened myself because of my sins and crimes. I knew that I dare not practice hypocrisy if I wish to side with you. I would have been obliged to confess the whole burden of my sins, to expose all my inward misery—*and this I was not willing to do.* I was unwilling to abase myself.

"Then the young journeyman, Leonard Fichtner, came. His name, his appearance, his words—all accused me before God, the searcher of hearts. As yet I know not what horrible mystery attaches itself to this man, although I have a premonition of it; but I felt that my hour had come as soon as he had entered my door. O sir, what fearful conflicts have I passed through since that time! Let me not speak of it—it always seems like insanity, which threatens to rise within me. There must have been a time when I was physically and mentally dead—I know that I first came to life again at the death-bed of my Catharine. Sir," continued Homberger, profoundly agitated, "when I saw my child lying dead before me, her beautiful form sadly ravaged and disfigured by the plague, I recognized instantly that all my previous peace was false and deceptive—merely a lethargy—and that I am nothing but a poor, lost sinner. If you

can offer me any comfort, I wish you would do so, but it must be *now*, NOW! I feel as though my days and hours were numbered. O sir, I can say no more. I am exhausted unto death."

So saying the old man fell back powerless upon his bed.

"Fear not," cried LUTHER to him. "You are not sick unto death. You have only thrown off the burden which you have thus far carried with the strength of despair. You are just beginning to feel that you are weak in body. Be calm and hopeful, and you will become strong. *Then* we shall renew this all-important subject."

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRUE REPENTANCE.

"Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii. 20.

AFTER Homberger had left his sick bed, LUTHER addressed him as follows: "Your confession, dear master, has brought vividly to my memory the whole sad period of papistic delusion in which I myself have lived. I, too, have suffered just as you have, and perhaps my suffering was greater than yours, You ask me to give you the true consolation: listen then, while I tell you how I obtained comfort for myself."

"Sir," interrupted Homberger, "have you really ever borne such a burden as I have?"

"If you mean," replied LUTHER, "to ask whether I have broken the fifth commandment, as you have done, then my burden was certainly less than yours. But, my friend, when conscience is once disturbed and terrified at the justice of the God of retribution, and unable to obtain peace, the anxiety and fear of every one is probably great and burdensome enough to embitter life. If our sin is great, our punishment will certainly be great; but the grace of God will be great also."

"I know but little of the Scriptures," said Homberger, "but there is a passage which I have often repeated to myself, and which has frequently afforded me much comfort—the words which Christ spoke to the woman who anointed him: 'Her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.' For the

great wrong which I had done was caused entirely by my love, which impelled me to do as I did. Had I not loved the Milanese lady so tenderly that I thought I could not live without her, I would never have committed so great a sin. Besides, you can believe me, Doctor, I have done many charitable deeds in my time; I have always relieved the poor and the needy, I really have a kind heart toward my fellow-men, I have never served any one for mammon's sake; *I* can say that I have loved much."

"Poor friend," exclaimed LUTHER. "With such a consolation you will not get far; for it is a false comfort and a false interpretation of the language of our Lord. Christ does not wish to say that many sins are forgiven to him who does many works of love, but that he who does many such works, shows by this that he has received the forgiveness of his sins. Works of love are the *fruit* of sins forgiven, but not the *cause* of grace with God. Where forgiveness of sins is, there life and salvation is, there *much love is:* the heart *must* love again, because it has been so greatly and gloriously loved by God. A reconciled heart performs the best works, hence the purest fruits of repentance are born of faith, after the grace of God has been received. We are not justified before God on account of our good works, which are merely proofs that we are justified before God by grace and for Christ's sake. Before the heart is reconciled with God, it is incapable of performing any good works whatever; the true love of God, which keeps God's commandments for God's sake, is derived only from true faith in God, from that faith which we repose in Christ unto the forgiveness of sins."

"Oh, sir," exclaimed Homberger, trembling with joy, "I do not as yet comprehend all you say, but so far as I grasp it, my soul is refreshed with a peace to which I have thus far been a stranger. Ah, now I cry to *you: Proceed, dear sir, proceed.*"

"I told you," said LUTHER, continuing, "that my torment was like yours. The fulness of peace will be yours, I doubt not, even as it became mine. St. Paul to the Romans, in the first chapter, says that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of Christ. And this little expression, the *righteousness of God*, caused me the heaviest hour of my life. I hated it more than any other in the Scriptures, and would have wiped it out altogether. Poor, silly, and blind, I did not then know that the only consolation for all poor sinners is enshrined in these very words; for how did I interpret '*the righteousness of God?*' I understood it, as so many others do, to mean that God was righteous in and for himself, that he always did what was right, and that he enforced justice; that he could not do what was unjust, and therefore punishes every sinner and unrighteous person. Now, if I had thought that sinners and unrighteous persons were those only who murder and steal and bear false witness against their neighbor, I might have comforted myself with this. I had transgressed none of these commandments knowingly. I lived, so to speak, like a holy and irreproachable monk, and did more than was required of me, and there was no one, I suppose, who could have brought charges against me; and yet I had no rest, no peace of mind. Notwithstanding all my good works, I knew that I was a great sinner in the eyes of God;

and my conscience was ill at ease, depriving me of all joy in life, and tormenting me night and day."

"And why," inquired Homberger, "could you not comfort yourself with your good works?"

"Alas!" said LUTHER. "I did not trust to them. The phrase, 'Righteousness of God is revealed' confounded all my good works. I fasted and starved myself, I tormented and tortured myself beyond expression; I wept bitter tears of penitence; but all was of no avail. I said to myself, you are a great sinner before God, notwithstanding all your efforts, and with all your expiation, and the merits of your good works, you cannot conciliate the 'righteousness of God.' And the more penance I did, the more anxious I became. I had no love for this righteous and angry God, who punished sinners. On the contrary, I hated him; and although I did not express my feelings, yet in secret, I was bitterly enraged against him. I often said to myself at that time: 'Is not God satisfied that we poor, miserable sinners, already condemned to everlasting death through our original sin, bearing the terrors and threats of the law, sighing beneath the manifold sorrows and griefs of this life—is not God satisfied with all this? Must he increase our misery and grief still further through the gospel, by causing his *righteousness*, which punishes sin, and his severe anger, which condemns the unrighteous, to be proclaimed in the preaching of the gospel? Of what use is the gospel, if it makes our miserable lives still more miserable? Of what benefit is Christ if he only judges and condemns, but does not save and bless? Ah, dear friend, you cannot have endured greater torments in your

distress than those which I have borne. I was often enraged in my confused conscience, and lost confidence in the Scriptures, and particularly in my dear St. Paul, whom I otherwise loved so dearly. I even doubted God. O how often did I ask myself, 'What does St. Paul mean by saying that the *righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel?* Has it not been revealed already by Moses and the prophets? If we already know by the law that we are poor, lost sinners before the righteousness of God, of what avail is the gospel, if it tells us nothing new and better, but only *confirms* and *increases* the wrath of God?

LUTHER now lapsed into silence, as though he would live over again this hardest period of his life—this first act of his inner man's new birth, this corner-stone of his reformatory work—not in anxiety and fear, as he did then, but in blissful joy that he had attained to a knowledge of redemption in Christ.

"You move me greatly," exclaimed Homberger. "Now I begin to understand the disquietude of my own heart. It is not only my one crime which accuses me before God, but my general sinfulness—the burden of my inherited sin, which I share with all men, and which the just God must punish in us all, because we are all sinners. Miserable wretch that I am! How could I balance the righteousness of God with all my repentance? O, speak on, dear Doctor: as one dying of thirst longs for water, so do I crave the solution of this mystery."

LUTHER now proceeded, his face irradiated by a happy smile: "Day and night were passed by myself in such agony of thought, until by the grace of God I

observed how these words of St. Paul, 'The righteousness of God is revealed therein,' that is in the gospel, were followed by, as it is written: '*The just shall live by* FAITH.' And now I, a poor, blind worm, first perceived that the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel is *not* that which punishes sinners and unrighteous men, but that in which, by the grace and gift of God, he becomes justified who lives by faith alone."

"My dear Paul then would say: 'By the gospel that righteousness is revealed, which avails before God, in which God justifies us by grace and mercy through faith in his dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.' As it is written: 'THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.' When I had grasped this, I at once felt like a new man, and as if a great, wide door had been just opened, through which I could enter into paradise. The Holy Scriptures now had a different look. I now perused the whole Bible with feelings of gladness, and everywhere I found my peace and happiness confirmed and sealed. Not until now did the grand and holy harmony of God's entire revelation appear; not until now the true distinction between the law and the gospel; not until now the joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Every page of Scripture now spake a new language to me; I now knew what the Bible means, when it says, 'The work of God, it is *that* work which God *works in us*. God's power is *that* power by which God makes *us* strong. God's wisdom, *that* wisdom by which he makes *us* wise. God's glory, *that* glory by which he *glorifies* us.' And as I had before hated the expression—'God's righteousness'—in real earnest, I now began to love it with all my soul, and this passage in St.

Paul had now of a truth become the gate of heaven to me."

"And to me also," here cried Homberger, in a burst of rapture. "Yes," he continued, whilst the bright tears rolled down his cheeks: "Yes, that surely is an everlasting, saving truth. I had no idea that the human heart was capable of such blessed joy as that which now pervades my whole soul. Now I also know that my Redeemer liveth, that I have the forgiveness of my sins in Christ, my only Saviour. Now I know that all my lamentations, my weeping and mourning, all my works of penance, all my anxiety and torment, could avail me not, if I did not believe that God forgives my sins by *grace alone* for the sake of his dear Son, and justifies me through *him*. Ah, how happy, how blessed I am in my heart! How I shall now love the Lord, my God, since I know that he loved me in his Son."

LUTHER smiled as a blissful memory arose within him and then said: "Once upon a time, when I was still under the papacy, I saw Doctor Staupitz administer the sacrament, and the sight of the Crucified One so terrified me that I could not regain my composure. When I poured out my complaint before the dear man at confession, he comforted me, saying: 'It is not Christ who has frightened you; for Christ never terrifies, he only comforts.' This saying of his was indeed a great solace to me, but I did not understand it rightly till later. For Christ is only then the greatest consolation of the wretched and the poor, when we know and believe that he is everywhere present, and that he will be and is with us even unto the end of the

world. Our only comfort is this—that we believe in Christ; apart from Christ there is neither comfort nor counsel, nor help for any one."

"And this solace," said Homberger, evidently expecting assent to his question, "is given to ALL who believe in Christ? And what you now say to console me, I may take home to MYSELF as a SURE comfort in my great and grievous sins?"

"Beware lest you DOUBT it," replied LUTHER. "When you hear me or any other minister in the church comforting you with God's own word, you should steadfastly believe it, as if you heard God himself speak to you from heaven. For I, called to be a steward of the mysteries of God, have received the authority and the command from God to comfort you and to forgive your sins for Christ's sake."

"Ah, sir," Homberger now entreated him, "I heartily desire to have the proof of the forgiveness of my sins, and as I know, that I can best obtain this assurance by receiving the sacrament, I wish you would still further take a Christian interest in me, and teach me how to receive absolution aright and how to confess my sins before absolution, in a truly Christian way."

"All your confessions," said LUTHER, "and all your absolution is naught, unless you repose the fullest confidence in the mercy and promise of God, and abide therein, firmly believing that God Almighty, in his grace and mercy, will forgive all your sins. When you say: 'For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity,' then your whole soul must be sure beyond a doubt, that the Lord *can* be gracious and *will* be gracious."

"Alas!" said Homberger, "how unhappy I would be if I doubted this. If faith does the work, then, sir, I can well be of good cheer. But my sins are so numerous and great, and although I know that the eye of God looks down into the depths of my heart, yet I feel that confession of sin to the priest is necessary."

"You are certainly to confess your sins," said LUTHER; "but before you enter the confessional, you should first make confession to God, in the stillness of your heart and of your closet. And this you should do with all diligence and seriousness, as though you were on your knees before the judgment throne of the divine majesty."

"And which sins shall I confess?" inquired the master-carver.

"All you know and feel in your heart," was LUTHER'S instruction. "To the just God and Lord you must clearly and unreservedly confess not only the sins you have actually committed, but also your sinful wicked thoughts, as many as you can recall."

"And," continued Homberger, "is it really true, as the church teaches, that those sins are not forgiven which have not been confessed?"

"It is certainly true," answered LUTHER; "but only when you intentionally conceal your evil thoughts and deeds, for it would then be a sign that you are not deeply and fully penitent, and that you are laboring under the horrible delusion that God may be mocked. The sins of him who knows that he has sinned, but does not take them to heart and repent of them, are by no means forgiven. Penitence without reformation is of no value. Hence every Christian who would

confess his sins should have an honest will and purpose to lead a better life, and especially to avoid all grievous, mortal sins, and to combat without ceasing the besetting desires of his nature, because the most, the greatest temptation to sin arises from it. If you wished to confess without such a serious resolve, it would be truly hazardous; and I would not advise any one to confess who does not in all honesty purpose to become a better man, and to lead a godly life. God's judgment will hold him and his confession."

"Alas, dear sir," rejoined Homberger, "I trust I have this honesty of purpose, but how can I confess all my sins? How great a burden rests upon me, from my youth up to this present time! I have forgotten much of the good which God has vouchsafed me, and still more of the evil I have committed."

"You should not torment yourself with such thoughts," LUTHER said consolingly. "David says: 'Who can understand his errors?' You are only to confess those sins which burden your conscience—the rest you may pass by, for it is impossible for a man to confess *all* his sins. Only be on your guard not to think of yourself as though you had committed many sins, but still none such as are deserving of death, for that would be the *deadliest mortal sin.* I well know how you were taught under the papacy to torment yourself by counting and distinguishing particular sins, to set up an extensive and manifold list of sins, stating all the circumstances, enumerating the sins, first according to the five senses, then according to the seven mortal sins—so that a person might well have trembled with anxiety, not at the punishment of his sins,

but at the superhuman work of confessing them in detail. God's mercy!—what anxiety and torment that was for a poor, repentant soul! Lay all that aside. The publican smote upon his breast, saying: 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' and he went home *justified*. But inasmuch as a general confession of sins is void of profit and blessing, if one's conscience is not pricked by the individual sins, you should look into your heart and life in the light of the ten commandments, to see how you have sinned against them; and I fear that in so doing the list will become full large. And do not be troubled as to whether you have forgotten this or that sin. Even though the sins are *forgotten*, they are all *forgiven;* for God does not consider how well or completely we made our confession, but whether we are heartily sorry for our sins, and whether we believe his promises. And if a priest were to say: "Some of thy sins are forgiven thee, others are not," that priest is no true servant of Christ. The forgiveness of sins is plainly taught in the expression that *God is gracious;* for if God is *gracious*, then all our sins are, of necessity, blotted out. According to your faith, be it unto you."

"That is very comforting to him who believes. Now, indeed, I know that I believe; but I am so poor in faith that I can hardly grasp with distinctness that Christ died on the cross for *my* sins. O dear sir, teach me to contemplate aright the death of Jesus."

"The first look at the cross of the Lord Jesus is certainly not an encouraging one for us," answered LUTHER. "I can never behold the Lord on the cross without a shrinking heart and a timid conscience;

for in the crucified Lord I see the just wrath and the unchangeable sternness of God towards sin and the sinner; for God would not permit even his own Son to release us from the consequences of sin without his taking it upon himself. As God says by Isaiah: 'For the transgression of my people was He smitten.'—How shall I, a poor sinner, fare, if the only-begotten Son of God is thus punished? When I become absorbed in the thought that the Son of God, the Eternal Wisdom of the Father *himself*, has suffered, I cannot rid myself of fear and apprehension on my own account."

Alas, dear sir," exclaimed Homberger, sadly, "there is little comfort in that; for if Christ was slain for the transgression of the people, is it not my sin also which rests upon him?"

"Most certainly," answered LUTHER; "no sincere Christian should doubt that he is the one who causes Christ to suffer thus—every man has a share in it, because of his own sin. By all means let it alarm you, dear friend, and it will only be for your good. When St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, cried out to the Jews: '*Ye have crucified him*,' there came three thousand, whose hearts were alarmed by these words, asking, as with one voice: 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' When you behold the pierced hands of the Lord, and the crown of thorns upon his head, it will do you no harm to think—'*My* sinful thoughs and acts have contributed to my Lord's sufferings.' It will do you no harm, dear master, if for every thorn which pierces the head of Christ you feel ten or a hundred in your heart, so that the sufferings of Christ may not be lost on you."

"But *this* does not afford me comfort," rejoined Homberger; "it presses me down into the dust."

"And yet," said LUTHER, "it does this solely in order to heal your wounds, and to raise you up more gloriously. I have experienced the very same thing in my own case. And dear St. Bernard fared no better: he long imagined himself to be safe, and knew nothing of the everlasting judgment which had been passed on him in heaven, until he saw God's only Son step forth, pity him, and give himself up to this condemnation in his place. Is God so much in earnest as to let his Son die for me to effect my salvation?—verily, there can be no more trifling, no more false security. This is what Christ meant when he cried out to the sorrowing woman: 'Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.'"

"How sad then my heart should be, and is!" cried Homberger, in deep gloom.

"Thank God that such is the case," said LUTHER consolingly. "For the greatest advantage arising from the sufferings of Christ is that these bring us to a knowledge of ourselves, that they alarm and cast us down in view of our wretched sinfulness and the sad condition of our hearts. As long as the glance of our Lord from the cross does not descend into the depths of your heart and conscience, and let you know how miserable its condition is, so long do the sufferings of Christ remain inoperative for you. *But to suffer with Christ* means to *feel in the misery of our sins* all *his* sufferings in *ourselves*."

"Ah, sir, how can I do that?' inquired Homberger. "I have no language to express the thoughts of my soul."

"Nor are many words needed," answered LUTHER. "Only lay hold with deep, earnest thoughts, and the true apprehension of the punishment richly due our sins. You said that all this gave you no comfort. Ah, dear master, only in case your heart were so hardened that the sufferings and death of Christ would not fill you with fear and bring you to a proper knowledge of yourself, then there would be just cause for apprehension. For it is the condition established by God that we suffer with Christ, that in the misery of our sins we must share all the torture and agony of the Crucified One, if we would be exalted with Christ to glory. In this respect we must become like Christ—if not here, then in the place of torment. Cruel though it may seem, yet I say: Blessed is he, who even in the hour of death feels terror at his sins, and suffers the agony which Christ suffered on the cross. Let him, however, who would have a happy death-bed, not wait until that time, but let him beseech God to soften his heart *now*. Besides it is impossible for us thoroughly to know and feel the sufferings and death of Christ, if God does not impart it to our hearts. Here too God alone gives us the will and the power to act."

"Ah," cried Homberger, "how differently and how much more painfully does this affect my heart than the sorrow and repentance which I practiced for so many long years of my life, in order to atone for my sins. Now only do I recognize how low I had fallen, and why all my works of repentance could bring me no relief."

"Yes," added LUTHER, in a solemn tone, which was evidently the key-note of his own soul, "this *com-*

munity of suffering with Christ for a single day, a single hour, yea, even for a few minutes to meditate on and feel this divine passion in the right way, is worth more than to fast for a whole year, to pray the psalter every day, and to hear a hundred masses. Such meditation on the death of Christ essentially changes our whole being, and effects a new birth, even as holy baptism does. The true, simple and noble aim of Christ's passion, is to destroy the old Adam within us, expose the wickedness and self-confidence of the natural man, in all its weakness and unworthiness, and make him feel forsaken and alone, even as Christ says: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'"

"Why must I learn this so late in life!" said Homberger. "I feel as though youthful vigor were needed for this, and not the infirmity of an old man."

"O, do not fall into a new error," cried LUTHER. "The power to feel the death of Christ in all its startling force, is not in our own hand. Believe me, dear master, I have been engaged in this work honestly and faithfully for a long time, and although I constantly pray for such knowledge from on high, yet I have never obtained it at will. Nevertheless, this does not make me despair or desist. It often comes at a time when I am not praying for it, for God alone knows and wills the time. In fine, the whole matter must be left to him."

"You say this," rejoined Homberger, "with such a glad heart, as if it were nothing but bliss to suffer with Christ; but it has made me feel very sad and dispirited; yes, I now have less peace of mind than before."

"Be not afraid," said LUTHER, cheerily; "thus far you have only been in *Passion Week*, and have celebrated a real Good Friday; but now we come to the glorious *Easter Day*, and the *resurrection* of Christ. If there were no *risen* Lord, a *crucified* One would be of no service; or, as my dear St. Paul says: 'If Christ be not raised, our faith is vain; we are yet in our sins.' The death of Christ on the cross does, indeed, remove our sins; but it also casts us down with them. Therefore, my dear friend, look into the *empty* grave of the Lord Jesus, and hear his kindly greeting: 'Peace be unto you.'"

"Yes, it must be so," said Homberger, his eyes lit up with joy. "I do not yet behold the *full* glory of the risen Christ; but I feel that the angels of God have rolled away the stone which lay at the door of my heart for so many, many years. Ah! my dear Doctor, I now begin to perceive that a deadened conscience is a heavy burden, but an awakened one is a thousand times heavier. Were it not an awful sin, I would say: Happy is he who has altogether silenced the voice of his conscience."

"Yes," said LUTHER, "one whose sight has been quickened by the gospel, and who by its aid looks into his heart, certainly beholds no paradise, but a waste spot overgrown with weeds. When a Christian has thus become aware of his condition, and is alarmed thereat, he must be careful not to encourage his terror and alarm, for such a procedure would certainly end in thorough despair."

"Sir," Homberger now interrupted him, visibly disturbed, and yet with a show of confidence in his tone:

"I will not hesitate to tell you, you speak the truth. I am not clear as to what happened, God in heaven is my witness: you can believe me, dear sir, I only know that I was driven to despair, and—yes, it cannot be otherwise—I must have committed some act of despair. There is a time in my life of which I know but this, that I was dead; for when I came to life again everything had changed, and it must have been a long and fearful night in which I was dead. You need not tell any one, dear sir."

"My poor friend," said LUTHER, kindly, "comfort yourself with the thought that the forgiveness of sins renders one so happy as to overcome all shame. Only do not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ, if it has become the power of God unto salvation to you also. You should rather compare the peace which you now enjoy with that false peace which you sought, whilst you were still held in the bondage of popery, and which you imagined yourself to have secured, and you will soon know where *true salvation* is to be found."

"*Christ alone*," said Homberger. "These are the words which rouse me from death to life—the last words on the lips of my dying Catharine. With this name *begins* my second life on earth. Sir," he continued, earnestly, "I must tell you that long since my early life was not wanting in conviction of sin. Yes, I truly believe that I felt remorse more deeply in the bygone days than now. Sin gnawed at my heart like a serpent, and burned me like a fire. I tortured myself, as you are aware, with good works and all kinds of penance. I ran hither and thither for indulgences to purge myself of sin. I neglected no pilgrimage: but sin rested

on my heart like a mountain, and all the false security, which calmed me for a time, melted away like snow before the fire. Ah, now I know that I must cast my sins upon Christ, if I would be delivered from them."

"Yes, you must do that," said LUTHER, "if you really and truly believe that Christ's sufferings and wounds are your sins, which he bears for you, and for which he is crucified. For thus we are told by the prophet Isaiah: 'The chastisement of our peace was upon him; the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' St. Peter bears witness: 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.' And St. Paul testifies in like manner: 'For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'"

"And can I retain this faith?" asked Homberger.

"If you *wish* to retain it, yes," answered LUTHER; "but you dare not imagine this peace to be a bed of safety on which to cast yourself whenever you are tired and weary of the conflict. No, no, my friend—a good bed must be made afresh each day; and the only way to do this is to trust boldly to the teachings of the cross, to which I have already called your attention, planting yourself firmly upon this doctrine whenever fear assails you. Do this with increasing boldness, as the assaults of your conscience increase in violence; for if you fail to take this course, thinking that your sorrow for sin and your words of repentance can quiet your conscience, you will never have peace, but will come to despair at last."

"How is that?" inquired Homberger. "I have experienced the truth of this mystery, but I cannot solve its depths."

"It happens in this way," replied LUTHER. "When our conscience is disturbed and grieved on account of our sins, and we permit these sins to remain in our hearts as a daily reminder of our fall, and dwell on them constantly, then our sins become much too heavy for us, and will trouble us forever. Thus we are wounded every day, but never healed; cast down daily, but never lifted up. This condition, full of wretchedness, is the natural state of the human heart, which knows not that it has a Redeemer and Saviour. But when we see that the sins which oppress us are resting on Christ, and that Christ conquers these sins by his resurrection, which is a victory over sin, and when we believe this firmly and boldly, then our sins are dead, and brought to naught; for they could not remain on Christ—they are swallowed up by his resurrection. We now behold in Christ no more wounds, no more pains, that is, nothing related to sin. In this way alone can you, my dear friend, understand the words of St. Paul, that "Christ was delivered up for our sins, and raised again for our justification,' that Christ shows us our sins in his passion and death, and that he destroys them; but by his resurrection he frees us from our sins, and justifies us before God, that is, if we *only believe;* for without faith *all* is in vain."

"And yet how hard it is to believe," cried Homberger.

"Faith does not come for the mere wishing," added LUTHER, quickly. "If you wished to believe so as to enjoy salvation, and yet were unable to believe, you should earnestly and humbly beseech God to grant you faith. For faith is free only in the hands of God,

and is freely bestowed, openly to one person through sorrow and tribulation, secretly to another by the quiet influence of the Holy Spirit in the Lord. Now, my friend, since you have attained to a knowledge of your sinfulness, now you should no longer look upon the sufferings and death of Christ, for this has accomplished its work in you, and set you before the judgment of God; but you should rather press forward to the heart of Christ, with all the courage and joy of faith—contemplate it, see how kindly and full of love it is toward you, of such love as forced him to take upon himself your depraved conscience and your sin. Thus your heart will become happy in Christ, and the confidence of your faith strengthened. But do not stop here. Arise now through the heart of Christ to the heart of God, and see and know that Christ could not have brought forth this love to you, if God in his eternal love had not so willed it. Christ with his love to you is simply obedient to God. And now you find the divinely good heart of the Father, and are drawn to the Father through Christ. And now only do you understand the saying of Christ: 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' For, my friend, to know God aright does not mean to grasp him in his power and wisdom, for these only bring anxiety, fear and terror upon us; but it means to grasp God in his goodness and love. Here faith and confidence can stand, and man is really born anew in God."

"May God bless you for these words!" exclaimed Homberger, with a smiling face and a happy heart.

"That is the right expression—*born anew.* An entirely different soul lives within me. Not only the certainty of the forgiveness of my sins for Christ's sake makes my heart so glad and gives me a cheerful view of the Lord's throne of grace, but my whole past life has become all at once changed. When I, in days past, viewed the sorrowful and the gay, the good and the evil of my life, neither the good nor the evil suited me. How often did I complain to God of my fate as of a heavy burden, imposed by him upon man in wrath, or in a cruel whim, unconcerned whether it burdened the innocent or not. I took pleasure in collecting together all the crimes I could hear of in the world, for the purpose of finding fault with God's government. My own sins and crimes, for a time, were even dear to me, for I used them as an accusation against God. O thou, my faithful God and Lord, forgive the sins and follies of my youth! Now I behold constantly in my past life the eternal wisdom and righteousness of God; in the joys and sorrows of my life I see the traces of the same divine goodness and mercy, which will not suffer me to be lost. Yes, even the greatest sin of my youth, the killing of Pinetta, and the greatest grief of my old age, the loss of my Catharine, are reconciled in my mind—all finds its solution in the love of Christ to me."

LUTHER seemed joyously affected by this confession, and added: "As Christ has solved the enigma of your past life, so let him be your gracious exemplar for the rest of your life on earth. Still, it is hardly necessary to tell you this; for when the heart is fixed in Christ, and confirmed in its hope, and prompts to

lead a better life with all faithful diligence, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and when we are become heartily hostile to sin, not from fear of pain and punishment, but from love to him who first loved us, then will Christ with his passion and death become an example for our whole life."

"I *feel* what you mean," said Homberger, "but make it plainer to me, dear sir."

"Well," continued LUTHER, "when a day of sorrow, or some sickness befalls us, we are prompt in making complaint, and in uttering sighs as though no one had a sadder or more severe experience in the world than ourselves, and as if *our* suffering was the greatest of all suffering. Such unbecoming thoughts are easily dispelled, when we think of the crown of thorns and the nails which were pressed into the head and hands and feet of Christ. *That* was greater suffering. And so I conform my life and suffering to the example of Christ. When I am forced to do something I would rather not do—well, the Lord Christ was also bound, and led a captive. When pride assails me, and I am tempted to think highly of myself, and to desire to walk on nothing but roses and to enjoy nothing but glory—well, you poor, foolish servant, what do you wish for yourself when your Lord is reviled, and despised, and treated as a malefactor? If the lust of the flesh would lead me astray, or if hatred, envy or revenge would control my soul, my desire falls to the ground when I picture to myself the tender and beautiful body of Christ lacerated by blows, and when I remember how the Lord prayed with tears for his enemies, and even for me, although he had more abundant cause to

revenge himself on his enemies; then hatred, and envy, and revenge, one by one, leave me, and there remains only that hatred with which I hate the folly and defiance and weakness of my heart. But if tribulation comes, I strengthen my heart, and say: 'Why should not I also endure a little affliction, when my Lord was sad unto death, so that his sweat was like great drops of blood? Would not I be a wicked and ungrateful servant if I wished to lie abed in ease and comfort, whilst my Lord is forced to struggle with death? Do you see now, my dear master, how a Christian finds strength and solace against all the temptations of the devil, the world, and the lusts of his own flesh? This is the only right way to contemplate the sufferings and death of Christ—these are the *fruits of suffering.* And he who is exercised therein, into whose heart and life the passion and name of Christ enters, practices the words of St. Paul: 'And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.' For we are not to imitate the passion of Christ in words and outward seeming, but in life and in truth. St. Paul expresses the same wish, when he enjoins upon us: 'Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds;' St. Peter, the same, saying: 'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.'"

"Ah, doctor," now said Homberger, "you lead me into an entirely new world. I never would have thought that such a wondrous spring of comfort and wisdom flows for us in the gospel, and that Christ exerts such wonderful power."

"Yes," said LUTHER. "Judging by the light of reason, Christ's power is hard to understand. He conceals his strength so that he seems to be powerless. Nevertheless, he confounds the most mighty, the wisest and the holiest men in the world, emperors, kings, princes, popes, cardinals and bishops, with all their retinues and followings. Thus he, the mighty Lord, has confounded you, my friend, in the pride and rebelliousness of your heart, but in its stead he has crowned you with honor and happiness. He has let you feel and taste your misery to the end, that you might heartily yearn for his grace and help, and be justified and blessed forever by him. For this, praise the Lord as long as you live—praise him, and proclaim his WORD by repentance and faith, and confess before a wicked and godless world that the kingdom of Christ is an everlasting—a spiritual kingdom. The Christian's body is on earth, but his heart is in heaven waiting for the redemption of his body, and hoping for the blessed and glorious manifestation of his Saviour Jesus Christ. In fine:

> "Tho' waves may close around,
> In Christ is rescue found;
> Death still o'er time holds sway,
> Christ o'er eternity."

Homberger now held out his hand to LUTHER, and said feelingly: "Christ himself reward you, reverend and dear sir, for saving my soul from death. Yes, I was dead, and am again alive. And that I may show you the genuineness of my repentance, do me the honor and grant me the happiness of going down stairs and waiting till I come. I am not only spiritually raised up, but also physically risen again. I pray you,

go down, dear sir, and witness soon the reality of my conversion to the Lord."

LUTHER cheerfully complied with his desire, and descended to the family apartment.

CHAPTER XXV.

RECONCILIATION AND JOY.

"He that hath the Son hath life." 1 John v. 12.

MARGARET again occupied her wonted seat in the darkest corner of the room, attired in the same gray garment, like that of a nun; before her the same distaff, from which she spun the golden threads with so sure a hand. Everything was as it had been, excepting that her sister Catharine no longer sat at the window in her beauty, to see and to be seen; and her glittering jewelry, which had so often attracted the gaze of the passers-by, was laid away untouched, its only value to Margaret being as a memento.

All the past, with its bitter and its sweet, its joys and its sorrows, passed in review before the mental eye of Margaret, and she was absorbed in the contemplation of the depths of God's mercy and grace. "I can only submit to my Lord's will," she quietly mused. "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I would gladly have died in her stead; but thou only art a sacrifice for others."

The blind girl put aside her distaff, and took up a lute, on which Leonard had become her teacher. She sounded a few chords, and then sang in a low, but pleasant voice:

"There comes a galley laden,
A heavenly freight on board;
It bears GOD'S SON, the *Saviour*,
The great undying WORD.

"And proudly floats that galley,
From troubled coast to coast:
Its sail is love and mercy,
Its mast, the HOLY GHOST.

"Now earth hath caught the anchor,
The ship hath reached the strand;
GOD'S WORD in fleshly garment—
The SON steps out on land.

"Thou Bethlehem, the lowly,
Receiv'st Him in thy stall;
Thou giv'st Him rest and shelter,
Who comes to save us all.

"O! haste, my brothers, quickly
To kiss this little child—
Who dies a glorious martyr,
For souls with sin defiled.

"And he who dies with JESUS,
With JESUS he shall rise,
And love eternal waft him
With CHRIST beyond the skies."*

"How can you submit to remain my pupil?" just then cried Leonard, who had entered the room unnoticed, whilst she was singing. "This song shows that you are my superior. Where did you get that song, whose every word transports the soul into the world of the blessed? Come now, confess that the song is your own. No soul but yours can penetrate so deeply into the eternal love of God."

"Save your praise," answered Margaret, shaking her head. "The soul which felt, and was the first to sing this song, has long ago ascended to heaven."

"And who is it," asked Leonard, "that is able to

*From Dr. Philip Schaff's "Christ in Song."

give such glorious testimony to his communion with the Lord?"

"*John Tauler* is his name," replied Margaret. "More than two hundred years have elapsed since he sang it with free and loving heart behind the walls of a cloister."

"Bound *without* and free *within*," said Leonard—"like yourself, Margaret."

"Maybe because I am blind?" asked the girl. "Ah, my friend, are we not all bound externally, and only internally free—free in our faith and our love to the Lord? Is it not only then that we love him, when we serve him? And is not he who serves, bound to the will of his Lord? Even the angels and the spirits of the blessed cannot love God in any other way than by serving him. So there is but one that governs—God, the Lord. All others who think they govern, are only servants, bound the more the freer they deem themselves externally. And whoever will not serve the Lord God with property and blood and body, soul and life, will never learn to love him."

"Alas! I cannot follow you up to the heights of your knowledge," exclaimed Leonard. "I know, indeed, that I love God when I serve him; but what praise is due to a fettered will, if it serves *because* it is bound! Has not Father LUTHER quite lately spoken much concerning *Christian liberty?* I have heard from his own lips that man, of his own strength, has a free will."

"Yes," assented Margaret, "we have all received a freedom of will from God, by which we can do or leave undone external works, according as the law and pun-

ishment urge us toward or away from them. Worldly integrity and good works can be practiced of our own strength. Father LUTHER, using the words of St. Paul, called this the righteousness of the flesh, according to which we have the choice and liberty to flee from evil and to do good."

"Proceed with your sermon, Miss Margaret," said LUTHER, suddenly interrupting her, having entered by the door of the room, which Leonard had left open. Margaret's last words had reached his ear. "You may add," he went on in a kindly tone, "that God even demands such external or worldly righteousness from us. Thus St. Paul says that the law is given to prevent external transgression, and again, there is no law given to the righteous, but to the unjust and disobedient, to the wicked and to sinners. This means that we cannot change the heart by our own strength, but that we can and may indeed prevent actual transgression. I can not always banish evil thoughts from my mind, but I can prevent my hand from doing evil and my tongue from speaking guile. Yes, we stand on a gospel foundation when we say that God hates a heathenish life, but delights in external righteousness and demands it of every one; and still further *punishes* such dissolute conduct with all sorts of temporal evil and with everlasting torment."

"According to this," inquired Leonard, "a man can *externally* keep the commandments of God?"

"Certainly," answered LUTHER, "if the devil did not interfere with this freedom. For unless God protects and directs a man, the devil has the power to urge him on to sin, so that he can no longer practice

and maintain this external probity. It is necessary to know this, in order that people may learn how weak and miserable *that* man is who does not apply to God for help. But whoever recognizes this, will pray God to aid him to vanquish Satan, and graciously to protect and shield him, and grant him divine gifts."

"And how are we to cleanse our hearts from such evil thoughts?" asked Leonard. "Can we do nothing towards promoting a better spirit within us?"

"Surely," answered LUTHER; "but not by our own strength, since man cannot inherit divine gifts. For genuine sorrow on account of sin; genuine and unfeigned fear of God—genuine faith; cordial and faithful love—a truly chaste mind; a heart free from guile —allowing no vengeful thoughts to rise; real patience even under the heaviest crosses—yearning and humble prayer; love to God, which no worldly possession, neither avarice nor riches, can cloud or disturb—all these are not *human* powers; but are simply good and perfect gifts of God. The natural man, St. Paul says, can do no good work; he neither sees nor understands the just judgment of God, and therefore has not the proper fear of God; he does not see and understand the perfect goodness of God, and therefore does not trust and believe God in the right way. What then remains, but to beseech God with constant earnestness to bestow on us these gifts? This is called Christian piety."

"How people abuse the doctrine of Christian liberty!" exclaimed Leonard. "During my journey through Germany, I everywhere found persons who looked for liberty in the abolition of authority, and in no longer

being required to pay their debts. There were others again who thought that Christian liberty consisted in nothing but the eating of meat on fast-days, in no longer going to confession, and in doing no more works of penance. I even found people who feared neither God nor man, despised those in authority, preached sedition and dissension, led a life of unrestrained pleasure, and called themselves *Lutherans*."

"Yes," said LUTHER, "that is the work of the devil, who is unwilling to have his sway weakened; for Christian liberty consists absolutely in our becoming free from the dominion of the devil through the forgiveness of our sins, for Christ's sake, without any merit whatever of our own, but by the aid of the Holy Spirit. Such liberty is comforting only to pious and faithful Christians, and then it attracts to love God and to do Christian works. But those who are not protected by the Holy Spirit, are under the power of the devil, who urges them on to every sin and vice. This is the old, old prison of the human race, from which we can be delivered and set free only by the Holy Ghost, whom Christ has promised. Thus Christ himself says: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

"And this urges men toward fear, as well as toward love," said Margaret.

"Certainly, my dear young lady," affirmed LUTHER. "It impels toward fear when we reflect on the great danger in which we are, so that no one, *no one*, is safe from sin and shame, unless God preserves him; and it attracts toward love when we know and believe that we are protected by the Holy Spirit against all the assaults of the world and the devil. Hence Christ

commands us: 'Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation.' There is no part of the Christian doctrine which causes greater joy to pious hearts than our knowledge of the fact that God is willing to protect and govern us."

"But is not Christian liberty to make itself felt in the management of temporal matters?"

"By all means," answered LUTHER. "The Christian is free in this, that Christ, his Lord, does not bind him to the observance of the ceremonies and the juridical order of the Mosaic law. The Christian can adopt and establish the code of laws of any land, provided they assure civil rights. The Saxons have the Saxon laws, others the Roman. If only the secular authority is not opposed to God and reason, it may be approved and ratified by Christians; for all government, all authority, is of God. Scripture, therefore, tells us: 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man; but it must be order, and not disorder."

LUTHER was here interrupted in his remarks by Master Homberger's entering the room.

"Margaret, my child, where are you?" he cried, with a trembling voice.

And when he beheld her sitting in the corner of the room, be hastened toward her and pressed her to his heart, as he wept aloud, saying: "Margaret, *you* are the angel of my house, and *I* am the wretch who has fallen so low. Your blind eyes were indeed a punishment and a curse, but *for me alone*. You, the innocent lamb, were to bear my sin, that thereby I might be saved. How long have I resisted the good and gracious will of God! The death of the child, whom I

loved best only when I hated you most, first showed me the abyss into which I had fallen. Did I not know that Catharine has been received by the Lord in his mercy, I would now be unhappy and cheerless, even though I am a changed man. Margaret, I know that you have forgiven me; you, my faithful, pious child, could not hate your cruel old father, who cursed you in his awful delusion. Margaret, even as I, tormented by the evil one, once thrust you across the threshold of my house as the curse of my heart and of my life, so I now, a regenerate man, led by the Holy Spirit, clasp you to my heart and say: Thou visible blessing of my God, thou rich proof of my God's grace, stay with me. *With thee* I now serve one Lord. I am now happy in one hope with thee, and thy sainted mother and sister also rejoice over me, who was lost and am now found. Margaret, my earthly jewel, receive in this kiss the full measure of love and confidence, which for twenty years I have denied thee. Whoever loves thee, loves me; whosoever blesses thee, blesses me."

When her father, exhausted by the effort, ceased to speak, he received no reply from Margaret but the quiet weeping of her happy heart. "*My father!*" at length burst forth from her trembling lips, as she laid her head upon his heaving breast. No other words could she speak, and even these were unnecessary.

"And you," Homberger continued, turning to the young man. "Your entrance into my house marks the beginning of my greatest suffering, of my deepest fall, but also of my deliverance. I anticipate what you are about to say, although an awful gloom threatens to overcloud my present happiness. Tell me, boy, what is your name?"

"My name is the same as that of my dear, good father," answered the young man with feeling. "My name is *Leonardo Pinetta*, and *Milan* is my home."

When Homberger heard this, his knees trembled and refused to support him. He broke down, weeping aloud like a child, and raising his folded hands toward heaven, exclaimed, "O, thou merciful God, I am utterly unworthy of this favor!"

"Yes, my father is still alive," continued Leonard, as, with LUTHER'S aid, he raised the abject master from the ground. "Rejoice with me! My father sends you, through me, greetings of love and pardon. And my sainted mother, who died in the Lord Jesus two years ago, on her death-bed blessed my journey to you, and charged me to bring you her forgiveness."

"O cease," cried Homberger, covering his face with his hands. "This is too much! Let me drink it drop by drop, lest I be overcome with joy."

He threw himself on a chair exhausted, weeping and smiling alternately, like a happy child.

"Leonard," now said Margaret, her head drooping upon her breast. "Leonard, I keep my word, and in the presence of my dear father, whose approval I humbly beg, I ask you: Will you be my husband? if so, I will be your faithful, loving hand-maid."

"Life of my soul!" said the young man, as he clasped Margaret's hand, and knelt with her at her father's feet. "Father, can you, will you, bless us?" he asked.

Homberger made no reply. Encircling them with his arms, he pressed them both to his breast, weeping aloud and smiling by turns.

LUTHER, deeply touched by the sight, laid his hands on the happy pair, and blessed them, saying: "May Christ, our dear God and Lord, and bishop of our souls, which he purchased with his precious blood, preserve you, his little flock, in compliance with his word, that you may increase, and grow in grace and knowledge and faith in him! May he comfort and strengthen you, that you may continue firm and steadfast in every trial, whether of body or of soul! May he hear your prayers and hearken to your sighs when in trouble, and graciously fulfill your expectation and desire for the glad day of his glorious, blessed coming! May he reveal to you the glorious liberty and happiness of the children of God, and grant patience! To this may your own hearts, which love Christ, say 'Amen and amen!'"

And three happy hearts, with one voice, responded: "Amen and amen!"

PHILIPP JACOB SPENER.

Four Editions of Spener have been published within a year.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

No library of the pastor, or Sunday-school, or family, can be complete that does not include the volumes of this series.

PHILIPP JACOB SPENER.

This book deals with a most interesting period, and with a most interesting character. Spener was born in 1635, and died in 1705. He was Court Chaplain, and at the head of the Pietists, who insisted upon practical and experimental religion, as against formalism. The book is "a historical life-picture from the period in which the school of Spener arose." Having the form of a historical fiction, it preserves the continuity of character, plot, and events necessary to secure the attentive interest of the reader, while at the same time the historic atmosphere of facts and teachings is preserved in such a way as to give, from the example of real characters, both instruction and inspiration for obeying God rather than man, and for exalting the unseen and spiritual above the worldly and temporal. Our own age is not free from formalism, and all the aid which such books can bring to the side of practical and experimental piety will be welcome. This book is to be followed by others, each dealing with a historical epoch, while clustering the events about some leading characters, as Paul Gerhardt, John Arndt, Martin Luther, the Diet of Augsburg, Aug. Hermann Francke, etc. They will open fresh fields of knowledge and thought to many readers.—*S. S. World.*

It is a dignified story, giving a clear idea of an important period in the progress of the Protestant German Church, and of the life and teachings of one of its prominent theologians, whose influence was at its height between 1688 and 1705—the date of the story.—*American Bookseller.*

PHILIPP JACOB SPENER.

The life pictures drawn by Dr. Wildenhahn are justly celebrated for their attractive manner of setting forth historical facts and important truths. They are as fascinating as romance and as instructive as history. In the book before us such a picture is given of Spener, whose abundant labors in the Church are known, and concerning whom all who admire ardent piety and fervent zeal will be anxious to know more. The reading of this volume will gratify such a desire. It is brought out under the editorship of J. K. Shryock, A. M., who edited the beautiful Fatherland Series, and the publisher has given the book a dress that is worthy of its contents. We hope that he will be encouraged to give the public the other Pictures by the same author, and that books of this character will supplant the trashy novels, with a little religious coating, that pass in so many Sunday-schools and families for edifying reading.—*Lutheran Standard.*

Wildenhahn's books are commended to us by Dr. C. P. Krauth, in a short introduction prefixed to this book. He says of them all, that few books can give so much sure profit, both intellectual and religious, with so much elevated enjoyment. "They are pictures showing the Master's touch." This book is a historical tale, but one in which, as Dr. Krauth says, "the fiction waits on the history." It would be an unspeakable benefit to the Church and the world if the youth of the present generation could be induced to read such literature as this, and we would be glad to know that this book has gone into every Sabbath-school in our Church.—*The Presbyterian.*

This volume is an excellent contribution to the popular religious literature of our day. In the guise of an entertaining narrative, it brings before us the character and work of a great and good man, so well known as the champion of the cause of vital godliness in Germany, during the 17th century. Spener and Francke were one in spirit; and our own Zinzendorf, while at the University of Halle, enjoyed those pious teachings, the benefit of which is still realized by our Moravian Church. We commend the book heartily, and especially to Moravian and all other Sunday-school libraries.—*The Moravian.*

Literature of this kind is what the Christian young people of our families and churches now especially need.—L. A. GOTWALD, D. D.

This is the first of the six volumes of "Life Pictures," by Dr. Wildenhahn, which are so justly celebrated for their attractive manner of setting forth historical facts and important truths. They are as fascinating as romance, and as instructive as history.

The volume is brought out under the editorship of J. K. Shryock, A. M., who edited the beautiful Fatherland Series, and the publisher has given the book a dress that is worthy of its contents.—*Our Church Paper.*

Not only to the young, but to more mature readers, this book must prove both useful and entertaining. It relates to an epoch in history of which but little is popularly known—the so-called Pietistic movement which took place at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, of which Labadie of Geneva was one of the leading spirits. The central figure in this work, Spener, Court Chaplain to the Elector John George III., of Saxony, is scarcely less celebrated. His character, as portrayed by Wildenhahn, is one of singular beauty and nobility.—*Public Opinion, Chambersburg, Pa.*

This valuable historical life picture gives the reader a vivid insight into the character, the life and labors of that truly great good man, Philipp Jacob Spener.—*The Lutheran Evangelist.*

It will prove healthy reading for the family and the young generally. —*Christian Standard and Home Journal.*

The subject, the author, the translator, and the editor, at once commend this volume to our favorable consideration. Philipp Jacob Spener (1635–1705) was one of the great central figures in the religious history of Germany in the 17th century, and gave a name to a distinct school of theology and Christian life.

And the fact that the name of the editor of "The Fatherland Series" is on the title page will be a recommendation of no little value in the eyes of many.—*Presbyterian Banner.*

THIS IS A GOOD BOOK.—*Lutheran and Missionary.*

I am delighted with the book. This book ought to be (and others like it) in every Lutheran house, yea, in every Christian home. It shows how deep and evangelical is the piety of true Lutheranism. God bless the book, and your enterprise in undertaking it.—REV. M. L. CULLER.

Wildenhahn is, as we have said, well known as one of the best household story-writers of Germany, and the chief merit of his stories is, that they are truly historic in the sense that the fiction which connects the events and scenes of the narrative is employed only to individualize the history, and to present a real life-like picture of the times. This volume will serve to show that those are in error who assume that real active Christian life is opposed to orthodoxy, and proves that it is rather the result of it. The scriptural character of the confessions is set forth in an attractive way, so that the reader is led forward to study the doctrines of the Church, while seeking to gratify his interest in the narrative itself. We hope to see this excellent book have a large sale, among our Sunday-schools especially, as well adapted to their wants in furnishing wholesome literature, which is so much needed among the more advanced scholars.—*Our Sunday-school.*

I am glad you have taken this matter in hand; hope you will succeed in furnishing the Lutheran Church with a good, sound literature, for we are much in need of it. I think him (Spener) one among the greatest and best men the Lutheran Church has ever produced.—R. WEISER, D. D.

I have been greatly delighted with Spener. I felt so much pleasure in reading it that I could scarcely lay it aside until I had finished it. It is just such healthy Lutheran literature as we need for our churches and Sunday-schools. I shall await with impatience the appearance of the other volumes of the series.—REV. F. RICHARDS.

"*Resolved*, That the attention of the families, and especially of the persons having charge of Sunday-school and congregational libraries, within the Synod, is called to the series of Life Pictures proposed to be issued by Mr. J. Fred'k Smith, of Philadelphia, of which the life of Spener has just appeared.

"*This series* of lives of men most eminent in the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, written by Wildenhahn, is so attractive in its mode of presentation, so excellent in spirit, and presents so much of the genuine deeds and words of men whose memory is very precious, that it will do only good, and teach only truth, wherever it comes.

"*These Pictures* from the Lives of Luther, Melanchthon, Hans Sachs, John Arndt, Paul Gerhardt and Jacob Spener, enter so familiarly into the personal relationships and surroundings of these honored and beloved men, that we are brought very near to them, and their influence brought home to the readers. We heartily commend them."

Adopted by the Synod of Pennsylvania, in session at Lebanon.

I have read the book with pleasure and profit. I hope you will find an extensive sale. A book so interesting in its contents and so elegant in its form, ought to circulate widely.—REV. S. SPRECHER, D. D., LL. D.

It seems to me a very good deed from you for the Lutheran Church to publish this series of "*Pictures from the Life.*"—REV. J. R. LAURITZEN.

I noticed with much pleasure, on the cover of "*Lutheran Monographs*," that you intend to publish in English WILDENHAHN'S *Pictures from the Life*. I have read a number of them in German, and consider them most valuable books.—G. A. DOBLER.

I hail with joy the advent of PICTURES FROM THE LIFE. I hope it is the dawn of a better day in our Church literature. May you have eminent success in your most laudable enterprise.—REV. A. S. HARTMAN.

PHILIPP JACOB SPENER.

The first of the series, "Pictures from the Life," just published, is a delightful and interesting book. Although Spener was a Pietist and somewhat mystical, he was undoubtedly a great and good man, and did a good work. In a time of Pharisaic scholasticism and spiritual deadness, he insisted on the necessity of heart religion, called attention to the power of prayer, and deepened a belief in the directing presence of God's Spirit and providence. Thus he acted the part of a true reformer, and an influence was exerted which did much for the destruction of lifeless form and the diffusion of Christian life. We are persuaded that its general circulation would not only communicate pleasure, but do good.—*Evangelical Repository.*

It has been a standing wonder to me for thirty years that Wildenhahn's Spener and his other Life Pictures have not been made accessible in English for the household, Sunday-school and congregational library. They are so charming, so life-like, and so close and true to the original character of the men and times described, as to be pre-eminently good. To us Lutherans they are attractive, because they gather living groups around men whose heads we crown with honor; to others scarcely less attractive, by reason of the charm of grouping and fresh delineation of men and strange scenes.—B. M. SCHMUCKER, D. D.

A charming story of the Life and Times of Spener, the great apostle of practical piety in the Protestant Church. We have not time at present to enter upon an extended criticism of the work, which it well deserves, but content ourselves with recommending the book most cordially to our readers.—*Reformed Messengers.*

This volume aims to combine the charm of romance with the truth of history. It is a story, but a story based on truth. Dr. Wildenhahn has a distinguished reputation in this line of historical painting. Some of the productions of his pen have already been given to the public in an English dress, and this is another venture in the same direction. The story has much to commend it. The subject is one that, although somewhat familiar, has an abiding interest. Few men in the religious world have occupied a more conspicuous position, or left a deeper impression on the piety of the Church, than Philipp Jacob Spener. His name and his school of religion are historic; and whatever difference of opinion may exist in regard to some features of Pietism, which owes its name to Spener, there can be no difference in regard to the exalted Christian character of the man.

In this volume the story of that great religious movement is told, and no one can read it without becoming deeply interested. Although a translation, the style is easy and flowing. It is the language of heart and life. It is well adapted to family reading and the Sunday-school. We bespeak for it a wide circulation, assured that its influence will be good.—*The Lutheran Quarterly.*

If the readers of this translation derive half as much pleasure and information as we did from the original, they will be well repaid for their purchase. The Lutheran Church in America is an offspring from the Pietistic element in Germany, of which Spener was the great originator, and, of course, this volume derives a double interest to Lutheran readers from this fact.

Mr. Shryock has had an experience in editing and publishing books such as no other person in the Lutheran Church has ever enjoyed. The Fatherland Series stands as a lasting monument to his skill and success in this line. The present volume is gotten up in good style, and we hope it will receive the extensive sale it so richly deserves.—*The Teachers' Journal.*

It is happily adapted to the matured as well as the youthful reader, and its pages are interesting, instructive and *wholesome.*—THOS. H. LANE.

Glad to hear that you are bringing out some of my favorite *Wildenhahn* books.—J. G. MORRIS, D. D., LL. D.

. *Resolved,* That we heartily commend the Life of Philipp Jacob Spener, translated from the German of Dr. Aug. Wildenhahn by Rev. G. A. Wenzel, A. M., and published by J. Frederick Smith, 914 Filbert Street, Philadelphia, Pa.—PITTSBURGH SYNOD.

Pictures from the Life of Philipp Jacob Spener received. Have read it. Am much pleased.—REV. J. H. WALTERICK.

Am much pleased with PHILIPP JACOB SPENER, and hope that your efforts to present us with the series may be crowned with success.—REV. ENOCH SMITH.

Spener is a very interesting volume, and will fill a place long needed in the Church. It affords much practical instruction where heavier volumes could not reach a large class of readers.—REV. W. S. EMERY.

I wish you abundant success in your laudable undertaking of publishing these works.—REV. S. S. HENRY.

I am highly pleased with Spener.—REV. J. C. MOSER.

I am glad to learn Wildenhahn's works are to appear in English. The reading of these books will prove of such interest and benefit, that I am extremely solicitous that they should be largely circulated.—REV. J. P. HENTZ.

I have read SPENER, and am much pleased with it. It is just the kind of literature we want for our Sunday-schools, and, with the sentiment already created in favor of such books, I do not see why the series you have inaugurated should not prove a good success.—REV. W. M. FRYSINGER.

The publication by you of Rev. G. A. Wenzel's excellent translation of Wildenhahn's Spener, deserves the grateful acknowledgement of the Church. For a number of years, I have regretted that, with some of its companions, this edifying book, although translated and published in one of our Church weeklies, was inaccessible to our English readers, except through rare and cumbrous files. It is one of the very few books which can safely be placed in our Sunday-school libraries. It furnishes the very best religious instruction, under the garb of a most pleasing narrative, all whose main statements can be trusted as historical facts. Not only will it be interesting to the young, but it will supply the most mature with abundant food for thought. It will prove of great service by its protest against an imaginary holiness of life which ignores or depreciates sound doctrine, and against an imaginary reverence for the letter and form of doctrine, which knows nothing of its spirit and power. Let our people early become better acquainted with these heroes of our faith, and they will prize the more highly the heritage which God has given them in the Lutheran Church of their fathers.

I hope that the encouragement with which you will meet will be such that, at an early day, we may welcome the completion of the publication in English of the entire series, of which the Life of Spener is the first.—H. E. JACOBS, D. D.

I am acquainted with these six volumes of Dr. Wildenhahn's in their original dress. More charming, instructive, intensely interesting *Life Pictures*, it would be difficult to select from any language or from any period of our Church's history. If the bewitching style and the graphic delineation of characters are in any wise reproduced in the translation, I predict for this series of Life Pictures a popular enthusiasm that will exceed even that for the "FATHERLAND SERIES." There is nothing ephemeral in these volumes. These master themes have been handled by a master spirit; one, who is in deepest sympathy with the facts and doctrines set forth in these volumes; and who was not only *intellectually* persuaded, but who, *with his heart, believed* them to be absolute verities.

No Lutheran Sunday-school CAN AFFORD to be without these books. For they contain just what is imperatively needed for our young people to make them acquainted with the inner glory of their church; they will beget, what is so sadly needed, a true church-love.—A. C. WEDEKIND, D. D.

I am delighted with the book, and would gladly have it placed in every family in my congregation. It is just what our English-speaking members want to learn, the true life of our dear Evangelical Lutheran faith, which has been so sadly misrepresented and belied. The book has all the attractiveness of a novel, with none of its faults or injurious results. It is both pleasing and edifying. It is just the book to sharpen the appetite of our youth for the truth in its pure form, and for the more sober history of those trying times, of which it is indeed a "Picture."

Many thanks are due from the Church to its translator and publisher, and in these I can most heartily join.—REV. A. H. BARTHOLOMEW.

I am much pleased with the get-up of SPENER, and I hope you will have a large sale.—E. GREENWALD, D. D.

DIET OF AUGSBURG.

Literature of this kind is what the Christian young people of our families and churches now especially need.—L. A. GOTWALD, D. D.

It is a solid Sunday-school book, and we heartily commend it.—*Augsburg Teacher.*

It gives an account of the Diet of Augsburg at that critical point when the Protestants of Germany prepared and read their memorable confession. The courage of the seven princes and their adherents, the timidity of Melanchthon, the sublime faith of Luther in his castle retreat, the artfulness, intolerance, and assumption of Campeggi, and other Papal representatives, and the unfavorable attitude of the Emperor himself, are all described with historical accuracy, and in glowing terms, while just enough of the fictitious is introduced to relieve the stateliness of sober history, and give the picture a home-like air. We wish the book an extensive sale.—*Evangelical Repository.*

We heartily commend this volume as presenting its grand subject in a most attractive and entertaining form.—*Our Church Paper.*

It is a pleasure to take up such a book as this. It is well written, well translated, and well printed. Its publication is especially appropriate now, as the Church this year celebrates the seventh jubilee of the Augsburg Confession, on account of which the Diet of Augsburg is especially remembered. Those who read this life picture will receive a vivid impression of that great historical event. The book is worthy of being brought out in the beautiful form which the publisher has given it. The world would be greatly benefited if books of this instructive and edifying kind could be made to displace the trashy fiction, religious and otherwise, which is so extensively read, but which profits nobody.—*Lutheran Standard.*

The Diet of Augsburg is another of the "Pictures from the Life" Series. It is an excellent addition to the popular religious literature of our day.—*Church Journal.*

While it is a book of peculiar interest to the followers of Luther, it is one which may be read with profit and pleasure by any young or old person desirous of obtaining a more vivid conception of the stirring scenes of the period of the Reformation which it describes than can be gotten from any ordinary historical work. It will serve to refresh the memory and revive the interest of those who have read the same things in historical form, and to create a taste for ecclesiastical history in those who have not. There should be many more such books in our Sunday-school libraries, and our young people should be stimulated to use them so as to get from them the instruction which they are designed to convey. We would not do away with fiction entirely, but we would like to see it made the vehicle of useful truth. Let us have pictures for the young, but let them be like this book and its companion volumes, "Pictures from the Life."—*The Conference News.*

The book should have a special interest to us at the present time, since popery is now laboring to bring about the same state of things in this country that called forth the earnest protests of Luther and his coadjutors in the sixteenth century. By reading this story of the "Diet of Augsburg" we will learn something of the tender mercies of that bastard church toward all heretics, when she has the power, and something of the diabolical craftiness by which she would advance her interests at the expense of the liberties and of the salvation of the people over whom she tyrannizes.—*Philadelphia Methodist.*

This is indeed an excellent book. As stated in the title, it presents "Life Pictures;" and it paints them as life-like as words can do it. In reading it you imagine yourself in the very presence of the heroes of the Reformation and of their enemies. You seem to see and hear such men as Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, the Emperor Charles V., John, Elector of Saxony, etc., etc.—*Church Messenger.*

The doctrines of the Reformation, and their influence on life and character, are illustrated in a fascinating manner; and the important events that led to the presentation of the Augsburg Confession, together with the Confession itself, are laid before the reader. The book will need no recommendation to those who have read the former volumes of the Series.—*The Moravian.*

This is the second of a series of six volumes, containing pen-pictures of the lives of prominent men and events in the early history of the Lutheran Church. Mr. Shryock and Dr. Morris have manifested good literary taste in selecting for our English readers the works of so fine a German historian as Dr. Wildenhahn. The "Diet of Augsburg" is regarded as one of his best works. These gentlemen deserve the thanks of the Church for their efforts to bring the rich Lutheran literature of Germany before the English people of our church and other churches.—*Lutheran Evangelist.*

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
3 9306 01082192 0

PT 2580 .W18 M313 1882
Wildenhahn, August,
1805-1868.
Martin Luther.

DEMCO